Sustainability Projects Fund
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McGill

Fonds des projets durables
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SP0165 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the SP Staff via e-mail.

Project Title: Sustainable Orientation

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Actual Project Start Date: 5/15/2017   **Actual Project End Date: 9/15/2017**

1. **Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.**
   (400 characters maximum)

The project aims to change the culture of sustainability at McGill by changing the culture of sustainability during Frosh. Key accomplishments include buying more sustainable tote-bags, more sustainable SSMU handbooks, sustainability training of most of Frosh staff, and extensive toolkit gathering all the resources aquired in 2017.

2. **Your team listed the following goal in your application:**

Mainstream sustainability for new students by raising awareness and modelling best practices during orientation through more sustainable programming and materials (SSMU handbook, Frosh T-shirts, tote-bags, and planning).
_____

Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The Sustainable Orientation Project was able to plant the first seeds of change towards a more sustainable Frosh and maintream sustainability to the new students. Through this project, it was possible to buy more sustainable tote-bags and handbooks and train VP internals, VP Sustainability, O-staff, and leaders to sustainability issues. The training also helped the VP Sustainability reflect on several aspects of sustainability within their Frosh. Several of the faculties were able to identify points of weakness in their sustainabililty performance, look for solutions, and opt for cost-effective solutions that reduced their overall impact. In some cases where there was no cost difference between conventional and sustainable options, like the meal provided at beach day, sustainable options had been adopted for a first time. These decisions, which were often not initiated by the Sustainable Orientation Coordinator, show that the structure of the frosh has changed to integrate considerations of social and environmental sustainability in the decision making processes. We have also noticed important behaviors and habits; in several instances, members of certain sub-committees at Frosh reached out to inquire about sustainability of items not initially considered for the project. This is not a behaviour which would have been commonly observed in previous years when cost-efficiency was the only concern.

Creating a position of Sustainable Coordinator in each faculty also helped in that it put great responsibility on certain people who were interested in the topic to deliver results. This change in structure led for further improvements for some faculties than what was originally expected.

Each faculty committee also reflected on the sustainability measures that its faculty will take in the next two years. They were able to draft a plan that detailed how they will integrate the cost of sustainable tote-bags and identified key unsustaianble aspects that they recommend their committees to tackle in the future years.

3. **Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)**
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

Success: 1. A first success was to provide Tote-bags to all froshies that were made of more sustainable materials, sourced throught the main supplier, and at a lower cost than originally anticipated. This tote-bag also has a particular texture which increases awareness of sustainability measures taken this summer at Frosh. 2. Training all the VP Internals, VP Sustainability, O-staff, and Leaders on environmental sustainability was a net improvement to complement the inclusivity and accessibility trainings that frosh-staff had been receiving in the previous years. This empowered many people in the different committees to take action and change the planning of some of their events to make them more sustainable. 3. A lot of research performed throughout the summer to improve the sustainability at frosh beyond its original scope has been transposed into a written toolkit. This will not only allow future frosh coordinators to make use frosh 2017 resources, but will also help every event managers at McGill make their events more socially and environmentally sustainable. Challenges: 1. The reluctance of frosh staff to change their suppliers and of these suppliers to work with unknown manufacturers was underestimated in the creation of this project. This complicated the transition to more sustainable apparel, because it limited the search for different products to those of the manufacturers trusted by the current suppliers. Since there were no sustainable T-shirts offered at a reasonable price by these manufacturers, it was not possible to move forward with this initiative. 2. The search for more sustainable sponsor was not successful because the search for these sponsors began late in the summer and the methods used were probably not as optimal as they should have been. In order to help future sponsorship coordinators, a section on sustainable sponsorship was integrated in the toolkit. 3. Communication with most sustainability coordinators was very difficult throughout the summer. Few coordinators responded to emails and facebook communication, attended weekly meetings, and communicated any struggles/successes that they had in their faculties with the rest of the sustainability coordinators.

4. **What key points of advice or *lessons learned* would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?**
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

1. The first recommendation to give other SPF teams is to make sure to understand the entire supply chain or chain of command and ensure that you understand the concerns of everyone along that chain before the project gets approved. This may have helped us understand better and earlier on that the faculties did not want to change their apparel supplier and that this supplier was reluctant to change his manufacturers. Had this been known sooner, less time and energy might have been spent looking for other manufacturers and suppliers; a simple list of criteria would have given the same results.
2. You can anticipate part of the success of your project based on the enthusiasm of the decision makers. The project will be more difficult to realize and will have less alies if it's headed by individuals who are not fully involved in the organization that will undergo change with the SPF and if the decision makers are more passive than actively engaged. Even if the decision makers have financial or logistical concerns with the project, an active desire to change things (rather than just being passive to the project) is key to greater success.
3. When looking for sustainable products, it's impotant to conduct thouraugh research to ensure that the project money will not be used to finance a greenwashed product. Conducting such analysis allowed the summer 2017 team to realize that the "EKO" Screen Printing Ink proposed by one of the suppliers did not really carry any real environmental sustainability value despite it's claims. Ensuring that project managers have proper training in sustainability and that MOOS staff validates spending upon strong justificiation of how spending will help to improve sustainability is key to prevent falling in such scams.

5. **What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project's progress in coming years, if ongoing.**
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

A top-down approach by MOoS and SSMU to ensure that the committees renew their sustainability initiatives from 2017 is not recommended, as this may be perceived as an invasion of the committees' autonomy. Instead, it would

be recommendable that MOoS and SSMU's sustainability staff reach out to the student association's VP Internals in April of each year to see if they are interesting in discussing their plans regarding sustainability at frosh and if they need any information. This could also be a great way for MOoS and the SPF to discuss the types of projects that could be implemented in frosh with SPF money, the delays of approval, and the application procedure. It would be a great way for the SPF to keep in touch with the faculties and see how the efforts and resources of the Sustainable Orientation Project of 2017 impacted subsequent froshes.

There will be many opportunities for complementary projects at the faculty committee level in the future. The post-frosh survey provided several ideas that could be implemented, such as reduction of the amount of paper used as promotional material, a change in the way that most events are organized to reduce the use of solo cups, and provide and use more reusable water bottles. Most of these decisions can only be taken at the faculty committee level or at the event executive level due to the structure of frosh management. It is recommended that each VP internal ensures that they have read and understood the results of the survey and transfer the information to the person in charge next year.

In the future, the project should be taken in charge through a collaborations between MOoS and the faculties. MOoS could assist each faculties to advise on sustainability related matter and to follow up on the efforts from the Sustainable Orientation Project of 2017. It is, however, mainly up to the faculties to ensure that efforts are maintained on a year to year basis. Proper transfer of the resources acquired, such as this report and other notes relating to this project, should be transmitted from outgoing to incoming VP every year.

In future years, each faculty will take charge of the sustainability changes they want to make. Although having a sustainability coordinator under SSMU and/or MOOS can help centralize resources and coordinate activities, this approach does not properly reflect the structure of the Inter-Organizational Committee (IOC). It is recommended that each faculty creates a "Sustainability Coordinator" position each year, as was done in 2017, to dedicate the proper amount of resources to sustainability. Appropriate training in sustainability from the previous Sustainability Coordinator using the material attached and a thorough conclusion report from the Sustainability Coordinator would be ideal. Should the faculties decide not to have a sustainability coordinator, the Vice-President Internals, VP Social, or whomever is in charge of organizing frosh would be the people to contact and follow up regarding sustainability related matter at frosh.

Some of the faculties provided the 2 year plan for their faculty detailing the actions they recommend the 2018 and 2019 coordinators to take. It is important to keep those action plans as guide for the sustainability related actions to take. This will lead to a buildup in sustainability initiatives and will get each faculty frosh on a path to sustainability in the long term.

Finally, it may be recommendable that the SPF's working group get a sum of money approved for the permanent staff to distribute over the summer. Even though planning sustainability earlier in the summer may help to get approval requests on time, it's likely that most expanses requiring SPF funding would be planned by June. Having a sum of money approved on a pre-emptive basis, with strict guidelines for the types of projects it should be distributed to, would better reflect the realities of frosh and help to make this annual event more sustainable.

6. **Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams? Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information.** (800 characters maximum)

☒ Yes ☐ No

7. **In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:**

Each Frosh committee collects fees for their events through the sale of bracelets which covers all activities, and SSMU uses sponsorship to pay for the annual First-Year Handbook. The funding provided by the SPF will cover the added expenses for using sustainable producers for the first year while groups adapt their budgets to accommodate for the additional expenses for future years.

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Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.
(1,800 characters maximum)

8. **Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus?** ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**
   If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.
   (1,800 characters maximum)

The equipment that was purchased were T-shirts and Tote-bags. This equipment belongs to the froshies. The only maintenance and use in the future will be of personal nature.

9. **The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the "Actual" column.**

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target	Actual
# of Sustainable Orientation toolboxes developed for the use of SSMU and future Inclusivity $ Sustainable Coordinators working under each faculty	1	1
# of the 5,500 Frosh packages that include sustainability-related information	100%	104%
# of students surveyed on their perception of sustainability during Orientation and Frosh	250	1006

If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.
(1,800 characters maximum)

We also managed to give sustainability-related information to rad frosh, on top of everyone else that took part of sustainable frosh. Students were able to fill answer questions in the post-frosh survey and MOoS survey. 21 people answered the MOoS survey. The Post-Orientation Week Survey allowed people to leave some questions blank, which resulted in different amounts of answers: 985 people answered the first question, 981 answered the second question, and 138 people answered the open-ended question.

10. **Please report on your results for the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the "Actual" column.**

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	~700
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	~700
$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	0
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	11

Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.
(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

Outdoor club, Rad club, EUS, EdUS, PTOT, BASiC, MCSS, MUSA, SUS, AUS, MUS

If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below. (1,800 characters maximum)

#Partnerships: There are 11 partnerships between the project team and other McGill groups. These partnerships are mainly between MOOS and each of the faculty and non-faculty frosh groups.

11. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.

☒ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☒ Administrative Staff ☐ Academic Staff ☐ Alumni

12. Please rate your project team's overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.

☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☒ Very Satisfied

13. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team's experience with the SPF.
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

The entire SPF team was very supportive from the start of the project this summer. The close collaboration with SPF staff made it easier to navigate through new initiatives, anticipate challenges, and find solutions.
In the future, prioritizing initiatives led by the decision makers may be more appropriate to the mission of SPF and be more successful.
The little feedback provided by the faculties was positive overall. It praised the efforts that were made and the frosh teams seemed hopeful about the future of sustainability at frosh. It was recommended to take a more of a per-faculty approach in the future years.

14. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.
(Unlimited characters)

15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of <u>professional growth</u>? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer Not to Share

Through this project, I have developed a greater awareness of the challenges and success methods of implementing change in a complex organization or event like frosh. I have also developed a great network of contact throughout campus with people who are passionate about sustainability and want to make change on campus.

16. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of <u>personal growth</u>? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer Not to Share

Many people among the coordinators seemed to have gone through some personal growth in that they are more outspoken about sustainability issues of their events than they would have been without this project.

17. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.

☒ Budgeting ☒ Conflict Resolution ☒ Listening
☐ Communications ☒ Leadership ☐ Mentoring

☐ Negotiating   ☒ Public Speaking   ☐ Technology

☒ Networking   ☒ Stakeholder Engagement   ☒ Time Management

☒ Planning   ☒ Stakeholder Identification   ☐ Writing

☒ Problem Solving   ☒ Systems Thinking   ☐ Other (Please specify in the field below)

☒ Project Management   ☐ Teamwork

Other:

18. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer Not to Share

I have developed a greater understanding of sustainability in the apparel industry, dishware, water management at events, and other fields touched upon throughout the project. I have also developed a greater critical sense that's helped me see through greenwashing claims. This experience has given me a good experience as a first job in sustainability and will serve as a reference for many years to come.

19. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:

Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)
(1,800 characters maximum)

20. Per the Working Group's Feedback Letter from April 2017, please attach a 2-year plan detailing:

- **What next concrete steps SSMU and IOC intend to take in 2018-2019 and in 2019-2020 for making Frosh and orientation even more sustainable than 2017-2018 (e.g. all promotional material sustainable, all Frosh activities certified, etc.). Whatever that 2-year plan looks like, we suggest that it not include a paper handbook. One of the things we also sugest is that you try to pair your project with the McGill App, if possible.**
- **How IOC and SSMU plan to get there from an organizational and financial perspective. We will want to see who will do what by when. We will also want to know how you see the costs being integrated in the budgets of SSMU and faculties.**

Thank you for completing your Final Report!
Please e-mail your report to the SP Staff attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project
(e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.