



McGill

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The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability
in Higher Education (AASHE)
213 ½ North Limestone
Lexington, Kentucky
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Re: McGill University's STARS Submission

McGill University is proud to be a leader in sustainability. Our commitment is embodied in the many truly innovative projects underway across McGill as we aspire to achieve the highest possible standards of sustainability on our campuses—in our day-to-day activities, through our research and teaching, in our facilities and their operations, and by our outreach to the broader community.

McGill's sustainability efforts are guided by the Sustainability Policy passed by our Board of Governors in 2010, which builds on our 2001 Environmental Policy. McGill's senior leadership team is fully committed to the pursuit of sustainability as a priority for our university. The driving energy behind many of McGill's sustainability initiatives, however, comes not from the top but from the grassroots. A spirit of can-do collaboration—committed students and staff from across the university hatching ideas, forming unlikely partnerships, and making lasting change—is the hallmark of many of our sustainability successes, as can be seen in the examples below.

- **Sustainability Projects Fund**—This flagship \$840,000 per year program was established in fall 2009 through landslide student referenda. It is funded through student fees matched dollar-for-dollar by the McGill administration. The Fund has supported more than 80 projects to date, from bike racks and gardens to surveys and symposia. Approximately half of projects are led by staff and half by students. 90% of project teams involve staff-student collaboration. The goal of the Sustainability Projects Fund is to build a culture of sustainability at McGill. The Fund is the largest of its kind in North America and has been replicated at other institutions.

- **Local Food Sourcing**—McGill Food and Dining Services (MFDS) has embraced the goal of sustainable food sourcing, devoting 20% of their budget to local foods and purchasing over 30,000 pounds of produce annually from the Macdonald Campus Farm to serve in downtown campus dining halls. MFDS has also proactively integrated students in their sustainability efforts through initiatives such as the award-winning McGill Food Systems Project and an ENV 401 class research project that developed sustainable seafood guidelines now used by MFDS. Dining hall waste goes to “Big Hanna,” the largest in-vessel industrial composter in North America.
- **Greening Campus**—McGill has made a major commitment to greening the downtown campus. In 2010, McGill established Lower Campus as a pedestrian zone, eliminating 150 parking spaces, reducing vehicle access, closing a main street to vehicle traffic, minimizing impermeable surfaces, and creating welcoming green spaces that encourage people to congregate, reflect and share ideas. This project won a sustainability award from the City of Montreal in 2011.

It is my pleasure to present McGill’s first report using the AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS). STARS has proven to be a valuable tool for tracking and reporting on the University’s sustainability activities, as well as for identifying opportunities for improvement. We were pleased to be a part of the development of STARS from the very beginning, both as a site during the pilot and then a Charter Participant upon its official launch in 2009.

Our STARS submission is the result of significant campus-wide efforts, led by McGill’s Office of Sustainability. I am confident that the information contained in it is both current and accurate. We are proud of our Silver rating, but recognize that there is room for improvement, both in our practices and in our data collection and tracking mechanisms.

Sustainability initiatives have been rapidly gaining momentum at McGill over the past several years, and we are currently in the midst of *Vision 2020: Creating a Sustainable McGill*, a year of campus-wide conversation to set McGill’s strategy for the next eight years and beyond. Through this process our commitment to sustainability will grow both broader and deeper, and I look forward to McGill having much good news to report when we next update our STARS submission.

Sincerely,



Professor Heather Munroe-Blum