

Sustainability Working Group (SWG)

Annual Report

Date: May 2022

Purpose

The Sustainability Working Group Annual Report is provided to the Senior Leadership Team and posted on the Sustainable Queen's website. The report highlights key achievements of the Working Group and its four sub-groups. This report covers the period 2020-2022.

Introduction

Mandate and Purpose of the Sustainability Working Group

The Sustainability Working Group was established by the VPFA Office in the Fall of 2018 to provide strategic direction and recommendations for the evaluation, planning, development, communication and implementation of initiatives aligned with the university's sustainability goals and the carbon reductions targeted by the [Queen's University Climate Action Plan](#). In support of advancing a culture of sustainability at Queen's, the Working Group also helps identify and champion sustainability projects and initiatives that guide Queen's toward increasing engagement amongst employees, students, and the broader community.

Sustainability Working Group Membership

The SWG is co-chaired by Donna Janiec, Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) and Teri Shearer, Deputy Provost (Academic Operations and Inclusion). SWG members represent diverse groups from across the Queen's community, including staff, faculty, students, and alumni. The member composition can be found on the [Sustainability Working Group website](#).

Sustainability Sub-Working Groups

1. [Sustainability in the Curriculum](#)
2. [Alternative Transportation](#)
3. [Housing & Ancillary Services Sustainability Sub-Working Group](#)
4. [Campus and Community Engagement](#)

Key Accomplishments 2020-22

Curriculum

- In 2021-22, the Curriculum Advisory Sub-Working Group evolved into an advisory committee coordinated by the Office of the Provost, under the leadership of Klodiana Kolomitro, Associate Vice-Principal, Teaching and Learning and Sandra den Otter, Vice-

Provost (International). The mandate of the new Curriculum Advisory Committee is to provide recommendations to ensure learning experiences that embed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are available and accessible to students at Queen's University.

- A scrape of courses at Queen's was completed to create an inventory of SDG-related courses. A survey to validate the inventory and identify additional learning opportunities was distributed to all department heads.

Alternative Transportation

- The **Hybrid Pass Program**, launched in 2021, incentivizes alternative transportation by providing affordable access to occasional parking spots on campus. Daily use ranges from 110 – 130 cars of approximately 180 parking spots, or 70% of parking lot.
- The Alternative Transportation Sub-Working Group partnered with Kingston Transit to offer incentives to encourage participation in the **TransPass Program**, including a free month to new Transpass program users and allowing parking permit holders to put their pass on hold for two months while they try the program. The group has arranged for Kingston Transit to be on campus 2 times a month for in-person enrolment. [Studio Q](https://youtu.be/olw31WcglRc) produced a promotional video to promote the program: <https://youtu.be/olw31WcglRc>
- Bike infrastructure on campus was enhanced, including upgrading the storage facility at Mackintosh-Corry Hall to reduce theft, and obtaining approval to install five bike repair stations across campus. Engineering students have been engaged to design a standard bike storage as part of a Capstone Project. Funding will then be sought to enable installation of bike storage at 3 sites (Chernoff, Botterell, and by ARC). Completing all three sites will provide coverage to the East, North and Central parts of campus.

Recycling and Waste Reduction

- Mask recycling collection boxes were installed in all campus buildings by Facilities, and work continues to explore opportunities for recycling other PPE (e.g., hair nets).
- Dixie Tri Tower Cutlery Dispensers were installed enabling a transition from full cutlery packs to customizable selections, to reduce volume of plastics and waste. In the future the intent is to use the dispensers for compostable utensils.
- [ECO Container Program](#) was implemented by Housing and Ancillary Services to reduce the use of single use containers. The program achieved over 25K swaps by end of April 2022. In 2022, the Queen's Community was surveyed to inform the development of a single use container charge. The single-use charge is expected to be implemented in the Fall of 2022.
- A lab plastic recycling program was piloted to assess how the campus could divert this material from landfill.
- An audit of exterior waste was completed to help identify recommendations to improve exterior recycling on campus

Sustainable Living Series

- The [Sustainable Living Series](#) provides sessions on a range of sustainability topics over the academic year. These sessions are open to all, including members of the public. Topics have included Indigenous Perspectives on Stewardship, cycling in the city, effects of climate change on lakes, planting little forests and Queen's Carbon Footprint Report

Collaboration with Better Homes Kingston program

- Campus and Community Engagement Sub-Working Group established a partnership with the City of Kingston's Better Homes Kingston Program to engage student volunteers as Ambassadors. The Better Homes Kingston Program is a new four-year program that aims to retrofit 500 Kingston area homes. The program targets homes built before 1991 and was launched in April 2022.

Collaboration with Sustainable Kingston

- Leveraging its partnership with Sustainable Kingston, the Sustainability Working Group continues to sponsor Sustainable Kingston's Annual Climate Change Symposium and actively promote participation in the event.

Sustainability Reserve

- The Sustainability Reserve Fund is funded through in-year utility budget savings per the university reserve guidelines. The Fund is used to support sustainability related projects endorsed by the Sustainability Working Group, including the following:
- Contributed to the GGRP/West Campus District Energy Conversion to replace underground steam line with a new heating system, reducing Queen's University's greenhouse gas emissions by another 1,500 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) per year.
- Funded the feasibility study and the creation of tender-ready designs that led to the approval of three separate laboratory ventilation projects from the reserve funding that will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 1621 tonnes and support achievement of Queen's 2030 targets:
 - a. Chernoff: will provide 781 tonnes of GHG reductions.
 - b. Biosciences: will provide 572 tonnes of GHG reductions.
 - c. New Medical Building: project will provide 268 tonnes of GHG reductions.
- Funded a Bird/Window Strike Pilot at the BioSciences Complex and Humphrey Hall. Based on this work, the Campus Master Plan Advisory Committee approved the application of the bird strike film as a design standard.
- Funded the development of a NetZero App that enables individuals to track their behavior related to carbon use.

Responsible Investing

- Received a report on the work being done to implement the Investment Committee's Final Report on Climate Change Action Task Force (CCATF)

Sustainable Queen's Website

- Relunched the Sustainable Queen's website to provide a pan-university presence for sustainability.

Upcoming Initiatives

In addition to continuing to advance many of the initiatives outlined above, a number of new initiatives are underway:

- Using the foundational work done through the course tagging, work with faculties/schools to identify flagship learning experiences that relate to the SDGs
- Increasing awareness and understanding of the alternative transportation options available for staff, faculty, and students (e.g., through employee onboarding, etc.).
- Implementing a charge on single-use containers to encourage participation in the ECO Container Program and the use of reusable containers, while mitigating waste.
- Implementing a "Pay What You Can Café" (PWYC) in partnership with AMS. The café is a food rescue effort involving use of untouched food from the dining halls, accessible to all, particularly those who are food insecure.
- Creating a Housing and Ancillary services sustainability framework highlighting the many efforts and initiatives in different units across the department, while connecting these to the UN SDGs.
- Harvesting honey from the pilot campus apiary program. Hives and 60,000 bees arrived at their new home on West Campus in late April. Honey harvested in this first season will be available for individual sale and use in foodservice production on campus this fall.
- Creating a central repository of campus greening initiatives/data to inform planning
- Working with students from Queen's Backing Action on the Climate Crisis (QBACC) to support a proposal for solar picnic tables on campus.
- Following the exterior waste audit, next steps are being explored by the Facilities office, including removal of standalone bins and replacement with multi-stream recycling stations. Discussions on a robust educational campaign are underway.