|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MSU logo.jpg. | REPORT*From the…*Sustainability Education Committee |
| TO: | Student Representative Assembly |
| FROM: | Sustainability Education Committee |
| SUBJECT: | SRA 20B Sustain Ed Committee Report |
| DATE: | April 13, 2021 |

**Overview**

The committee took large strides this year towards building a stronger structure and pushing forward on ambitious projects. This ambition was also reflected in the early changes to the Operating Policy that were made last summer.

The committee first convened mid-last summer, where a chair was convened, and the committee structure was determined. It was determined that the committee would have two subcommittees: Subcommittee A and Subcommittee B. Each subcommittee met minimum of once per month, and the larger committee also met minimum once per month. This allowed the subcommittees to do work outside of the larger committee meetings and allowed us to focus larger committee meetings on updates and direction moving forward.

Originally, each subcommittee was also tasked with working on either a project or campaign in each term, and the goal was for each subcommittee to work on one research project through the year. While this was well intentioned, it became too much, especially in the Winter term. That said, we did get a lot of work done throughout the year, which we will outline below.

**Subcommittee A projects**

**Fall Project:**

Sobi Campaign

* In the fall semester, we ran a virtual Sobi Campaign. The campaign focused on highlighting the importance, ease and affordability of social biking services. It aimed to encourage the Mcmaster community to use this more sustainable mode of transportation as a part of their commute. This campaign also specifically aimed to encourage the McMaster and Hamilton communities to do more to support the SoBi program because it was at risk of ending.
* We ran our campaign on the MSU’s Instagram Advocacy page. We created information videos and graphics on the SoBi service, it’s features and use. Alongside this, we ran an online giveaway in which we gave away 3 two-month SoBi bike share prizes.

SoBi Article

* As a part of this campaign, we wrote an Op-ed in The Silhouette, highlighting the importance and value of the SoBi program and encouraging the Mcmaster and Hamilton Communities to do more to support the SoBi bike-sharing program.
* Article: [opinion-changing-the-gears-to-social-biking](https://www.thesil.ca/opinion-changing-the-gears-to-social-biking)Background: The program operator, Uber, unexpectedly pulled out of their agreement to operate the service during the middle of 2020. Subsequently, Hamilton Bike Share Inc, a not-for-profit bike-share operator, started a GoFundMe to try to continue operating the bikes at no cost to the city. Hamilton Bike Share Inc became a short-term operator of SoBi bikes and at the end of 2020 was eventually allowed by Hamilton's City Council to extend the operations contract until December 2022, allowing the SoBi program to continue operating!

**Winter Project:**

* In the winter semester, we focused our efforts on a research initiative.
* After realizing that McMaster University is one of the largest energy consumers in Ontario, the committee decided to review McMaster’s energy reduction plans.
* Specifically, this semester we reviewed McMaster’s past and current energy management projects listed in its [2020-2021 Energy Management Plan](https://facilities.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/09/McMaster-EMP-Report-2020-.v11-1.pdf) (EMP).
* We reviewed six energy management projects and compiled our findings and recommendations for the next steps in a final research pack to be handed over to incoming committee members.
* We also shared our finding with Abbie Little of the McMaster Academic Sustainability Programs Office.
* We enjoyed working on these projects and initiatives this year and hope that the work started on reviewing McMaster’s energy management plan can continue with future committee members.

**Subcommittee B projects**

Fall project/campaign

* McMaster Earth Week
  + We focused on SDG Goal 13 and decided to host McMaster Earth Week from October 26-30. The purpose of McMaster Fall Earth Week/Day was to engage and educate the McMaster community in sustainable and fun fall events. The week campaign included:
  + Meatless Monday Event with McMaster Veggie Club and MSU Food Collective Centre
  + Virtual Tree Planting – 100 trees planted on campus - [news](https://www.thesil.ca/caring-for-the-outdoors-even-when-were-all-indoors)
  + Nature and Hiking Bingo with Nature at McMaster
  + Sustainable Art Night – painting pinecones
  + Eating Seasonally and Locally Video with Hospitality Services
  + Autumn Earth Hour
  + We really enjoyed coordinating and collaborating with other groups. We could have improved on executing the event to get more people involved and have a larger impact
* Research
  + In the Fall, we thought of an idea to do a poll on undergraduate students to see how students feel about the climate emergency.
  + Modeled after the Abacus Data national poll commissioned by Seth Klein in 2019, we partnered with the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) to poll undergraduate students from U15 institutions.
  + Left the poll open for 6 weeks between Feb 1 – March 14
  + Received 5400+ responses
  + Data still being analyzed at Western University Students’ Council (USC)

Successes

* Having each subcommittee work on either a campaign or research task and then swap was a great concept!

Challenges

* Was challenging to keep up the scheduling and meetings consistently
* Did not have a year plan which meant we were making up the timelines and project/research targets as we went

Recommendations

* Create a year plan in the Summer for what you are going to do throughout the year. Submit to SRA by September latest.
* Define roles, goals, and timelines in year plan
* Schedule recurring monthly meetings for each term, to avoid logistical challenges of repeatedly scheduling new meetings
* Include in year plan time at the end of the year for the committee to decide what the next steps of the projects/research work will be. Will it go to the AVP UA next year as a priority? Should it turn into a student project for a Sustainability minor course? This should be determined and then communicated to respective parties before the end of Winter term. Perhaps even include in the year plan.

Warm regards,

Members of the Sustainability Education Committee

2020-2021