POLICY NO. 27

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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POLICY NO. 27 – SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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SECTION 1 – PREAMBLE

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN) unanimously adopted a set of global goals, known as the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), with the aim to transform the world over the next 15 years. These SDGs are universal, interconnected and were defined to meet the challenges of globalization. They target sustainability development issues such as climate and environmental degradation, biodiversity, energy, water, gender equality, inequality, justice, prosperity and education. Inspired by the UN's 2030 Agenda and its corresponding SDGs, John Abbott College's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has established links between its 10 Strategic Orientations and the SDGs; most notably with SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0 C of global warming above pre-industrial levels. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5 C between 2021 and 2040, if it continues at the current rate. Limiting warming to 1.5 C will require us to drastically reduce our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero CO_2 emission globally around 2050.[1] The College's core values of excellence in education, collaboration, creativity and well-being for all frame a holistic view of sustainability that aligns with the College's strategic orientation to act as an ecologically and socially responsible agent. Accordingly, the College is poised to take leadership in addressing the climate crisis in its operations, policies, learning activities and community outreach and will aspire to reduce its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

SECTION 2 – FOUNDATION

This policy respects the spirit and the letter of the *Sustainable Development Act* sanctioned by the National Assembly of Québec on April 19th, 2006 (*Loi sur le développement durable* L.R.Q. c.D-8.1.1) and provides a framework where all members of the College community can contribute to the success of its sustainable development initiatives.

SECTION 3 – DEFINITIONS

The definition of sustainable development used in this policy comes from the 1987 report from the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled "Our Common Future". This document, more readily recognized as the Brundtland Report, advanced the most consensual

[1]IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

[2]Brundtland, G. (1987). Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. United Nations General Assembly document A/42/427.

definition of sustainable development. This definition of sustainable development specifies that "humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".[2]

SECTION 4 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on 12 of the 16 principles from the *Sustainable Development Act*:

a) "*Health and quality of life*": People, human health and improved quality of life are at the centre of sustainable development concerns. People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;
b) "*Social equity and solidarity*": Development must be undertaken in a spirit of intra and inter-generational equity and social ethics and solidarity;
c) "*Environmental protection*": To achieve sustainable development, environmental protection must constitute an integral part of the development process;
d) "*Participation and commitment*": The participation and commitment of citizens and citizens' groups are needed to define a concerted vision of development and to ensure its social, environmental and economic development;
e) "*Access to knowledge*": Measures favorable to education, access to information and research must be encouraged in order to stimulate innovation, raise awareness and ensure effective participation of the public in the implementation of sustainable development;
f) "*Subsidiarity*": Powers and responsibilities must be delegated to the appropriate level of authority. Decision-making centres should be adequately distributed and as close as possible to citizens and communities concerned;
g) "*Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation*": Governments must collaborate to ensure that development is sustainable from a social, environmental and economic standpoint. The external impact of actions in a given territory must be taken into consideration;
h) "*Prevention*": In the presence of a known risk, preventive, mitigating and corrective actions must be taken, with priority given to actions at the source;
i) "*Protection of cultural heritage*": The cultural heritage, made up of property, sites, landscapes, traditions and knowledge, reflects the identity of a society. It passes on the values of a society from generation to generation, and the preservation of this heritage fosters the sustainability of development;
j) "*Biodiversity preservation*": Biological diversity offers incalculable advantages and must be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations. The protection of species, ecosystems and the natural processes that maintain life is essential if quality of human life is to be maintained;
k) "*Respect for ecosystem support capacity*": Human activities must be respectful of the support capacity of ecosystems and the perenniality of ecosystems;
l) "*Responsible production and consumption*": Production and consumption patterns must be changed in order to make production and consumption more viable and more socially and environmentally responsible, in particular through an eco-efficient approach that avoids waste and optimizes the use of resources.

SECTION 5 – SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the College community (students and staff), as well any group or organization that makes use of the College facilities. This policy should be considered in all internal and external activities of the College, including activities with other partners, contractors, suppliers and professionals associated with the College. The College commits to providing reasonable levels of material, financial, and human resources necessary for the implementation of this policy.

SECTION 6 – OBJECTIVES

This policy confirms the College's commitment to integrating the principles of sustainable development into its activities related to Academics (including teaching and research), Engagement (including recreation, co-curricular and extra-curricular), Operations (including transportation, maintenance, construction), and Planning and Administration. This policy aims to ensure that the College:

- Fosters greater understanding of the importance of sustainability and climate action;
- Acts in an eco-responsible manner; and
- Encourages the participation and engagement of all community stakeholders in accomplishing the targets established in the College's Climate Action Plan.

SECTION 7 – IMPLEMENTATION

For the purposes of this policy, the College will assign the implementation of this policy to the Sustainability Committee. The composition of the Sustainability Committee is as outlined in Schedule A attached hereto.

The Sustainability Committee will be mandated to:

- Develop a Climate Action Plan and determine indicators to measure its effectiveness (including raising awareness regarding climate action and training for the College community);
- Prepare an annual Sustainability Report and disseminate the report to the College community;
- Implement a strategy for continuous improvement regarding sustainability initiatives at the College; and
- Propose recommendations to the College Directors to advance initiatives related to the College's Strategic Plan.

SECTION 8 – RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities are shared throughout the College for the many aspects of this policy. Most significantly, actions for continuous improvement are the responsibility of all employees. The responsibilities for key stakeholders are outlined in Schedule A.

SECTION 9 – POLICY REVISION

This policy is to be reviewed every five years. The Board of Governors is responsible for approving amendments to this policy (subject to Schedule A).

SECTION 10 – EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy comes into effect upon the date of its adoption by the Board of Governors.

SCHEDULE A

This schedule is included for information purposes only and can be updated by the Directors' Table without the requirement of a policy amendment by the Board of Governors.

Roles and Responsibilities

Directors' Table

- Receives and approves the Climate Action Plan.
- Receives and approves the annual Sustainability Report.
- Responsible for the application of this policy.

Directors

- Approve goals under their responsibility in the Climate Action Plan and oversee their attainment.
- Ensure that data for the goals under their responsibility in the Climate Action Plan are available for the annual Sustainability Report.
- The Academic Dean recommends the appointment of one member from the Academic Administration, approves the academic-related goals in the Climate Action Plan and oversees their attainment within the academic sector.
- The Director of Facilities Management recommends the appointment of one member from Facilities Management to the Sustainability Committee.
- The Director of Student Services recommends the appointment of one member from Student Services to the Sustainability Committee.
- The Director of Continuing Education recommends the appointment of one member from Continuing Education to the Sustainability Committee.

Deans

- Review academic-related goals in the Climate Action Plan and support their attainment within their sectors.
- Provide available data for the annual Sustainability Report.

Sustainability Office

- Chairs the Sustainability Committee.
- Coordinates the development of the Climate Action Plan.
- Sends out a call, each fall, for committee membership from SUJAC, JACFA, JACPA, JACASPA (three student members, plus one alternate, three faculty members plus one alternate, one member from the professional classification plus one alternate, one member from the support classification plus one alternate.
- Generates an annual Sustainability Report from data collected and, where possible, provides access to the data.
- Provides guidance and support to the College community (e.g. management, departments, committees, etc.) regarding the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.
- Promotes sustainability in the College community.
- Develops and implements a communications strategy for informing the internal and external communities about the College's achievements in sustainability.
- Coordinates the review of this policy.

Sustainability Committee

- Actively engages in the planning and implementation of strategies and initiatives towards the attainment of the College's sustainability goals.
- Provides feedback to the *Sustainability Office* on the Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Report.
- Reviews this policy and provides feedback to the Directors.
- Committee Membership includes:
    - Chair of the Sustainability Committee;
    - Three student members plus one alternate;
    - Three faculty members plus one alternate;
    - One member from the Academic Administration;
    - One member from the Professional classification plus one alternate;
    - One member from the Support classification plus one alternate;
    - One member from Student Services;
    - One member from Facilities Management;
    - One member from Continuing Education.