



- Jeff Green
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Planning for a greener Mohawk

Mohawk College is looking to take a leadership role through an ambitious environmental policy.

The Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has yet to be approved by Mohawk brass.

“The plan looks to pull together all the sustainability initiatives that are under way at Mohawk,” explained Jay Robb, spokesperson for the college, who believed the plan would be the first of its kind in the Ontario system.

The earliest the plan could be approved is Nov. 9 at Mohawk’s board of governors meeting. The agenda for the meeting has yet to be released, and the plan’s organizers declined to comment ahead of the vote.

But the EMP is expected to shape everything from new buildings on campus, to growing food on campus and encouraging students and staff to use alternate forms of transportation.

“I thought it was quite a holistic plan, I was really impressed with what I saw,” said Lynda Lukasik, executive director of Environment Hamilton. She was consulted by Mohawk as an outside expert in environmental policy.

“I think Mohawk has set the bar high for themselves.”

The EMP would broaden the definition of sustainability for college policy, hoping to find overlaps between the environment, student life and cost realities.

It would set a carbon reduction target based on eight pillars ranging from waste management and paper reduction to alternative energy production on campus. The plan would even call for a campus farmers’ market.

Mohawk would be the first Ontario college to develop an all-encompassing EMP.

McMaster University has an environmental policy that issued an annual report card from 2004 to 2008 to identify and monitor targets. It then switched over to an annual sustainability report. In 2011, McMaster said they had more than 57 campus sustainability initiatives developed since 2008.

Mohawk's EMP said their carbon reduction target is in line with the municipality and ahead of the province and federal governments.

"The aim of the plan is to reduce costs and reinvest savings in areas that enhance the quality of education," said Robb.