PGSS Thomson House Purchasing Policy - 2013

Purpose:

The purpose of this Purchasing Policy is to promote the procurement of hard goods and cleaning services with reasonable price and high quality, while minimizing the negative effects on the environment from either their use or final disposition. Purchasing decisions made by Thomson House staff are critical in influencing the size of our carbon footprint and the amount of harmful chemicals exposed to building occupants and the surrounding environment. Choosing more durable and environmentally/socially responsible supplies is another step PGSS is taking towards a more sustainable Thomson House.

Principle:

When making purchasing decisions in Thomson House, environmental and social considerations should be equally important as the standard considerations when purchasing a product or service (e.g. price, availability, and performance).

Thomson House staff should search for more environmentally friendly alternatives for current products and services that are detrimental to environment in order to minimize the consumption of natural resources, and creation of waste, while maximizing the reuse and recycling of materials.

Products and services with the preferred attributes listed below should be chosen over conventional items as long as the fiscal variance is below 10%, given comparable efficiency.

Preferences:

To reach the above goal, Thomson house will strive to purchase products or services that:

When compared with competing products or services:

- Have lesser direct negative impact on human health, including: lethal, carcinogenic, sensitizing or other harmful effect following oral, dermal or inhalation exposure.
- Have lesser direct negative impact on environment, including: lethal or injurious effects on organism through short-term exposure or bioaccumulation of the substance.

When the above requirement is met, Thomson House will prefer products and services that are:

- Made from materials harvested in sustainable and environmentally responsible way
- Made of post-consumer recycled and/or recyclable materials
- Manufactured in an environmentally and socially responsible way
- Shipped in bulk
- Shipped with minimal packaging or with packaging made of recycled and/or recyclable materials
• Durable
• Produce minimal or no non-recyclable waste
• Energy efficient
• Water efficient
• Easily and economically maintained
• Certified biodegradable or compostable

When most of the above mentioned qualities are met, Thomson House will prefer products and services that are:
• Manufactured at a closer distance
• Manufactured by suppliers with no known negative environmental record
• Purchased from small businesses and/or businesses active in the community

To aid the selection and purchase of products and services with above mentioned preferences, PGSS recognizes various eco-labels including (not limited to):
EcoLogo, Green Seal, ENERGY STAR, EPEAT, Fair Trade, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Forest Management Certification, Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), and Biodegradable Products Institute’s Compostable Logo.

A complete list of eco-labels in Canada can be accessed at: http://www.ecolabelindex.com

Scope:

Any product or cleaning service that is not provided by McGill’s central purchasing authority is applicable to this Purchasing Policy. Food and beverage purchases by Thomson House are excluded from this purchasing policy, due to the complexity and potential price differences of sourcing alternatives. Since the purchase of food and beverages represents a large portion of Thomson House’s environmental footprint, it is recommended that food purchasing criteria be adopted by the Thomson House restaurant at a later date. PGSS will revise the purchasing policy and suggested criteria every three years.

In the case that PGSS management cannot comply with the purchasing policy, a rationale must be reported to the Board of Directors and the Sustainability Coordinator within two weeks.