

York University Advisory Committee on Responsible Investing

Thursday, September 17, 2015
Room 901, Kaneff Tower

Present:

Irene Henriques, Chair
Anna Zalik, Faculty of Environmental Studies
James Pratt, Research Officer, Faculty of Fine Arts
Lucas McCann, York University Graduate Students' Association
Manisha Joshi-Vijayan, PSC Student SubCommittee
Mithilen Mathipalan, York Federation of Students
Walter Whiteley, Faculty, Mathematics & Statistics, Faculty of Science
Trudy Pound-Curtis, Assistant Vice-President and CFO
Laurie Lawson, University Treasurer

Absent: Anna Zalik, Faculty of Environmental Studies

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The YUACRI Annual Report was submitted to Vice-President Gary Brewer who acknowledged receipt of the document and thanked the Committee for their work.

2. Minutes of June 1, 2015

The Committee reviewed the minutes.

A motion was put forward by James Pratt and seconded by Lucas McCann to approve the minutes of June 1, 2015. MOTION APPROVED

3. Report on Action Items related to the June 1, 2015 meeting

- Catherine Coumans, Coordinator Asia-Pacific Program at MiningWatch Canada and Gus Van Houten, Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School have agreed to participate in the upcoming panelist discussion on October 5, 2015. The panelists and members of the Committee will attend a luncheon after the event.
- Committee members were asked to send suggestions to the Chair regarding potential presenters and topics for the Winter panelist discussion. Some suggestions included a delegate from Glassman Lewis, Kevin Thomas from SHARE, and an investment manager with a focus on how to influence proxy voting. Proxy Voting was recommended as a possible topic for consideration at the next forum. It was also suggested that attendees at the panelist discussion on October 5th be asked to provide their feedback on potential panelists and suggested topics.
- Manisha asked that a discussion on YUACRI Terms of Reference be added to the agenda. This item was discussed under *Other Business*.
- YUACRI meetings for 2015/2016 have all been confirmed.

4. Panel Discussion Questions

The Committee discussed the format of the Panel Discussion. Lucas Mann agreed to introduce the two panelists and moderate the event. Each panelist will be given 20 minutes to talk about their perspective on responsible investing followed by a question and answer period. The Committee discussed a number of possible questions to present to the panelists.

- What is Responsible Investing? How does it work? Why do we need it? Why do we care? Who are the players and who is involved or affected?
- What does responsible socio-economic investing look like? What does it look like in the postsecondary education landscape? Are there ethical concerns?
- How do you engage the shareholders in discussion of responsible investing?
- What are the responsibilities of a bank for responsible investing versus that of a university?
- Universities are forward thinking and generally progressive, how should York University demonstrate those traits in their financial portfolio and what are the risks?
- How do you communicate concerns about investment?
- What does Mission based investment look like? How can divestment play a role in responsible investing?
- How can religious organizations and unions investing, help support causes?
- In what circumstances do you promote engagement or divestment?

5. Communication Strategy for Engagement Process

The Chair commented that the engagement process has been completed as outlined in Appendix A of the 2014-2015 Annual Report. The Committee had a discussion on the communication strategy for the engagement process. It is anticipated that a number of campaigns will be developing proposals for submission to the Committee in the fall. There was a suggestion that the engagement process and the evaluation process should work together so that people know in advance that their submission meets the criteria.

6. Development of Process to receive and evaluate proposal submissions

A Subcommittee was formed to review the evaluation process consisting of Manisha, Mithilen, Lucas, Jamie, Laurie and Irene. An invitation will also be extended to Anna Zalik to participate on the subcommittee. This Subcommittee will review examples of processes from other educational institutions for establishing the criteria and the evaluation process for submissions. The Committee will also consider: what are the criteria standards that each submission is expected to meet, who will read the submissions, who will vote, what constitutes conflict of interest, and the participation of other intellectual resources at the university in the evaluation process. YUACRI members are expected to read all submissions, however a smaller group could undertake a preliminary evaluation to filter submissions that do not meet the set criteria. Manisha volunteered to schedule a meeting prior to October 15th.

It was agreed that the following should be added to Appendix A: Process for Responsible Investment Representations for the York University Endowment Fund from York University Community.

“By submitting you are agreeing that your submission could be shared publicly”

7. Recommendations on Responsible Investment Coalition opportunities

Walter recommended Montreal Carbon Pledge as a possible Responsible Investment Coalition opportunity and will send a link to this site for further review. He will also assemble information on further coalition options and provide to Committee members at the next YUACRI meeting.

8. Status membership terms of appointment

The Chair confirmed that letters of reappointment were sent out to Committee members as appropriate. Trudy reviewed the terms of appointment and pointed out that these terms were established to provide continuity of membership by ensuring that terms of appointments do not expire at the same time. The VPF&A will consider existing Committee members for reappointment and will be considered for another term.

9. Other Business

There was a discussion of the Terms of Reference for the Committee on page two under Purpose of the Advisory Committee, second bullet "*Identification of companies that may be involved in activities contrary to the University's principles and beliefs, where active engagement by York's investment managers would be warranted*". Clarification was requested as to whether the term active engagement was used without any specific reference to the option of divestment. Trudy confirmed that the term active engagement refers to a continuum of activities which would include divestment. It was clarified that the Terms of Reference for YUACRI are not set by this Committee rather by the President's Sustainability Council and cannot be changed.

There was discussion on how the activities of the Investment Committee are accessible to the public. Laurie reported that the Annual Endowment Report as at December 2014 has been posted on the Board Investment website. The change in Investment Policy as it applies to ESG, as well as Proxy Voting highlights have both been integrated within the SIP&P. Laurie will provide the link to the Bentall Kennedy website.

Action Items:

- Committee members were asked to send suggestions to the Chair regarding potential presenters and topics for the Winter panelist discussion.
- The Chair will send to the panelists an outline of the session "Responsible Investing: A Multi-Perspective Discussion" on October 5th, as well as the proposed YUACRI questions.
- The Committee to review the evaluation process will meet prior to October 15, 2015. An invitation will be extended to Anna Zalik to participate on this committee.
- Provide Committee with link to the Bentall Kennedy website.
- Manisha to arrange a meeting of the Subcommittee to develop the criteria and evaluation process for engagement proposals.

