



Bee Campus Application

Name of College/University

Mount Saint Vincent University

Address

166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3M 2J6

Name of Applicant

Jillian Ruhl

Applicant's Job Title

Laboratory Instructor, Faculty Supervising Dietitian, Faculty Supervisor of the University Community Garden, and Campus Beekeeper

Organization or Department

Mount Saint Vincent University

Applicant's Email

jillian.ruhl@msvu.ca

Applicant's Phone

+19028800573

Briefly summarize why your College/University should become a Bee City Campus

MSVU was the first campus to get honey bee hives on campus within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Beginning in 2017, the honey bees were met with enthusiasm and enchantment! See link for article: <https://www.msvu.ca/the-buzz-on-campus-honeybee-hive-installed-at-the-mount/> Since then, Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Community College have followed, seeking our advice along the way.

We also have a colony of bumblebees that were rescued and relocated from a construction site. We also have plans to install leafcutter bees in a blue dome hotel structure.

In order to enhance the understanding of the students and staff about the vital role that pollinators play in a healthy ecosystem, the applicant agrees to meet the following commitments required of all Bee City Campuses:

1. Adopt the Bee City Canada Resolution.
 2. Create a Bee City Pollinator Team.
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Pollinator Team Members

Jillian Ruhl, Community Garden Faculty Supervisor

Yogeswari (Yogi) Kola, Community Garden Coordinator until April 2023 (student position - new hire coming May 1st, 2023 as current student will be graduating)

Steering Committee Members:

Susan Trenholm, Dean of Professional Studies

Tom Strapps, Director of Facilities Management

Jackie Hughes, Manager of Facilities Operations

Daphne Lordly, Chair of the Department of Applied Human Nutrition

3. Develop a Pollinator Habitat Action Plan:

The MSVU campus has a beautifully diverse campus of trees, natural landscapes, and flowering bushes and trees. We are known for our 30,000 crows that come each evening for protection as a flock. We have our friendly family of 9+ deer that students are always seen taking pictures beside. We also have 2 eagles now that have become the talk of the town!

Besides our thriving community garden that has an apiary of 2 beehives and will have 2 hens and a coop/chicken run from April-Oct. We have a native plant garden in the community garden, a sacred Indigenous Plants Plot outside of our Indigenous Student Centre used for growing traditional medicinal plants, sage and sweetgrass for smudging ceremonies, and other lovely native species,

and we also have a Butterfly Garden outside of the MSVU Art Gallery (more details copied below).

As an Action Plan, we hope to expand the species of bees on campus such as leafcutters, expand the community garden and restructure to grow more food and herbs for the student food bank, and continue to grow the Finding Flowers project. We also hope to do more research and citizen science projects, such as more data inputs in our iNaturalist Project called “Creatures on Campus – MSVU Community”, and remediated arsenic from soil that is all over the Halifax peninsula but doing chemical analyses of soil and plants that uptake soil contaminants.

Mike MacDonald, Finding Flowers, and Butterfly Gardens at MSVU

Mike MacDonald (1941-2006) was an artist of Mi'kmaq and settler ancestry, born in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Mike spent much of his life living in British Columbia but regularly drove across Canada, working as a video installation artist and gardener in addition to pursuing photography and new media projects. His self-taught practice focused on the land and natural world, incorporating plants and animals in much of his work. He found inspiration in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources, drawing from science as well as traditional medicine and ethnobotany.

From the late 1980s into the early 1990s, Mike recorded testimony and created visual documents for the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en nations during their land claim challenges. While shooting videos near Kitwanga, BC, in an area threatened by clear-cut logging, Mike's encounters with butterflies inspired him to talk with Elders in the region. By his accounts, it was through the Elder's teachings that he gained understanding of the butterfly's connection to medicine plants and healing.

Inspired by his encounters with butterflies and their connection to medicines, Mike planted butterfly gardens, which he conceived of as art installations, across Canada from 1995-2003. His gardens were an artistic effort that made space for contemplation, close observation of butterflies and their interaction with medicine plants, and prioritized Indigenous knowledge over the commodification of land.

What is Finding Flowers?

Excerpt from findingflowers.ca Finding Flowers Project is an interdisciplinary research project that integrates art, ecology and education within a biocultural approach to native pollinator and plant diversity conservation. Inspired by the work of the late Mi'kmaq artist Mike MacDonald, Finding Flowers grows, revitalizes and cares for native pollinator gardens as art installations, and as spaces for community contemplation and knowledge co-production. Co-led by Anishinaabe artist, curator and educator Lisa Myers and native-bee ecologist Dr. Sheila Colla, Finding Flowers' main focus is

researching, replanting and caring for the more-than-twenty Medicine and Butterfly Garden artworks created across Canada by the late Mi'kmaw/Beothuk and 2-Spirit artist Mike MacDonald.

MacDonald's gardens were originally planted, and some continue to exist, surrounded by different plant life and languages across the land we know as Canada. Distinct from colonial conceptions of gardens, MacDonald conceived his gardens as art installations, and as spaces for community contemplation and environmental reflection. The Finding Flowers research team is housed in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC), at York University, and is funded in part by the Government of Canada New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The Butterfly Gardens at MSVU

In 1997, MSVU Art Gallery mounted a solo exhibition of art works by Mike MacDonald, which was curated by Robin Metcalfe and titled Digital Garden. In conjunction with the exhibition, Mike partnered with MSVU Art Gallery to plant a small Butterfly Garden on campus grounds. The garden no longer exists, but MSVU Art Gallery will be re-planting it this year in partnership with Finding Flowers, as part of their larger research project and initiative to create new gardens inspired by Mike, and re-plant many of his original gardens.

The garden Mike planted in 1997 was located along a section of the retaining wall that borders the parking lot located on the north side of Seton Academic Centre, near the Art Gallery entrance. The garden was made up of perennial plants that are primarily indigenous to the region. Mike regularly came to visit and tend to the garden.

The garden to be planted in 2022 will be in a different location due to the anticipated future removal of the retaining wall (as per communications from Facilities Management). MSVU Art Gallery has been in conversation and consultation with Facilities Management to determine a new site for the garden. The exact location is yet to be finalized but will likely be closer to the Art Gallery entrance, by the duck pond, or it will be near the original garden location, adjacent to the rose bushes and path from the parking lot to Seton Academic Centre. Lisa Myers will be travelling to Halifax this summer to work with MSVU Art Gallery staff and community stakeholders to begin planting the garden.

4. Promote Education about Pollinators:

We currently run workshops from Spring to Fall which include beekeeping 101, pests & diseases, honey extraction, native pollinators, Two-Eyed Seeing Camp youth workshop, Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) camp workshop, conference presentations.

We also do a gardening workshops, such as gardening for pollinators, spring-winter planting, etc.

5. Celebrate Pollinators:

I am very vested in challenging "Save the Bee" campaigns that focus on honey bees. Native bees are the focus of my own beekeeping journey, and I use the honey bee hives on campus as a talking point to better inform the public and those who are interested in "saving the bees" or becoming apiculturists.

I/we, the undersigned agree to:

1. Publicly acknowledge Bee City Campus designation through publicly displayed signage, city/region/community website and other means.
 2. Annually re-apply for Bee City Campus designation. A renewal application will be sent to you and a fee will apply.
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Bee City Renewal Fees

3000 or Less students - FREE

Please submit a short 50-100 word write-up of why it's important to become a Bee City Campus.

Universities are the hubs for knowledge creation and translation. As its own community that spreads to surrounding members external to the campus, it can impact its surroundings from its own microsystem to a macrosystem. Each year, an impression is made on domestic and international students who thus impact their own practice and ways of life. To instill a love for nature and pollinators early in developing identities and those questing for ongoing knowledge and continuing education, we can positively help the globe and Earth.

With new research showing how environmentally damaging honey bees are, I wish to use the apiary as a way to reach people interested in honey bees to advocate for better practices that support native pollinators and habitats. If everyone gets honey bees, we don't have the flora capacity to support them all and native bees will suffer (as well as certain species of plants that could become extinct based on pollinator preference and competitiveness).

Since universities are evidence-based and leads in research, I strongly believe that higher education should promote the latest research - however many egos it may burn!

Signature of President/Official

Jillian Ruhl

Date

03/09/2023