Summary:
This research will examine how public institutions, and the MUHC in particular can contribute to the development of a sustainable community food system that, through food production, processing, distribution and waste management, support the environmental, social and economic well-being of a particular place.

Background:
Food procurement policies, at an institutional level, govern how food is sourced, stored, prepared and disposed of within an organisation.

In most public institutions in Canada the implicit policy has been to source and serve the cheapest food available. This has typically meant purchasing food that has travelled incredible distances to reach consumers, which has been grown, processed and distributed in ways that have negative impacts on public health, food quality, the environment and the livelihoods of food producers. Institutional participation in this cheap food economy has contributed to social, economic, environmental and health crises. However, there are examples where procurement policy development has attempted to lend support for healthier, more responsible food systems.

Research Aims:
1) To consider how a revised hospital food procurement policy for the MUHC can contribute to the development of a healthy community food system.

2) to make policy recommendations for the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC).

3) To examine the potential costs and benefits to revised hospital food procurement policy

An overview of existing local community development and food system initiatives will be provided, as well as several precedent case studies, in the hopes of illustrating both the challenges and opportunities to revising MUHC hospital food policy.

How can a revised food procurement policy be a means towards improving the sustainability of hospital operations and providing benefits to the local community?

Expected deliverables (June):
• an analysis of quantitative research on sustainable food procurement
• case studies of public institution food procurement initiatives
• an analysis of existing relevant policies, plans and initiatives that could support the development of a sustainable community food system
• food procurement options for the MUHC
• the development of several implementation scenarios for the MUHC and recommendations
• an analysis of study limitations and areas for future research