

Reaching Up, Reaching Out

A Strategic Framework for Concordia University

2009-2014



MISSION WHO WE ARE

Concordia University is welcoming, engaged, and committed to innovation and excellence in education, research, creative activity and community partnerships. It dares to be different and draws on its diversity to transform the individual, strengthen society and enrich the world.

VISION WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE

Concordia's vision is to rank among Canada's top five comprehensive universities within the next decade, and to be a first choice for students and faculty locally, across Canada, and internationally in a wide variety of defined areas of research and study.

VALUES WHAT DRIVES US

Concordia's core values stem from those long prized by its founding institutions. Concordia has adopted the motto of the city of Montreal, *Concordia salus*, which speaks to well-being through harmony. The union of two very different institutions of higher education has led to an exceptionally successful synthesis of compatible and timely values.

Excellence

Concordia values the curiosity and engagement of its faculty, staff, and students. Curiosity about the world around us, respectful engagement with those who inhabit it, and strong determination to improve it lead to productive exploration of current understandings, a rich spectrum of creative activity and practice, and the creation and dissemination of new knowledge.

Opportunity

Concordia values the openness and respect necessary to provide opportunities to a highly diverse student and faculty population. Diversity at Concordia is interpreted broadly: for example, in addition to embracing diversity in ethnicity, gender, language, and accessibility, Concordia provides students with different and original ways of exploring their interests. Enabling faculty, staff and students to make a progressive impact on their world in ways that respect and engage the uniqueness of each individual is a hallmark of Concordia.

Quality of Life

Concordia values a secure and respectful learning environment and workplace. Concordia is committed to promoting a healthy, safe and sustainable campus and to enhancing the quality of life of the community in which we live.

Contents

1. Setting the Stage	1
2. Informed Decision-Making	3
3. Where We Have Come From	5
4. Strategic Analysis: Where We Are Now	7
a. Internal Analysis	
b. External Environment	
5. The Concordia Advantage	17
6. Strategic Imperatives I: Three Strategic Directions	21
a. Academic Work of the Highest Quality	
b. Outstanding Student Experience and Student Engagement	
c. Community Engagement and Social Responsibility	
7. Strategic Imperatives II: Two Supporting Strategies	26
a. Best Practices in Administration	
b. Communicating our Success	
8. Implementation: Where We Go From Here	28
a. Process	
b. Implementation Plans	
c. Implementation Challenges	
d. Monitoring and Reporting	

Setting the Stage

Strategic planning within a university is a complex, continuing process, rather than a project with a single product. It allows a community of students, staff, volunteers, teachers and scholars to collectively revisit the institution's past, mission, culture and challenges, to articulate a vision for the future, and to explore opportunities for growth and renewed impact on the wider community and society as a whole.

The Concordia community has been engaged in a broad-based consultation process that has led to a high level visioning statement and outline of strategic goals. A preliminary document was widely circulated and discussed during the autumn of 2008.



It was subsequently revised to reflect the substance of open consultations and comments submitted in various ways – directly to the President, via the University web site or in World Cafés. Many valuable suggestions were made as a result of the work of three Presidential Panels (see Appendix A) and further consultations. In this document, *Reaching Up, Reaching Out—A Strategic Framework for Concordia University 2009–2014*, the goals and objectives are grounded in assumptions and factual information about the University itself and its external environment, and are also accompanied by examples of specific initiatives that will make up subsequent implementation plans.

Two working definitions of “strategy” are proposed below to illustrate the double necessity of identifying both the goals and the actions required to translate aspirations into reality.

Strategy as goals

An organized response to the environment, based upon a particular set of goals, which seeks optimal benefits to the organization’s employees, clients and volunteers by:

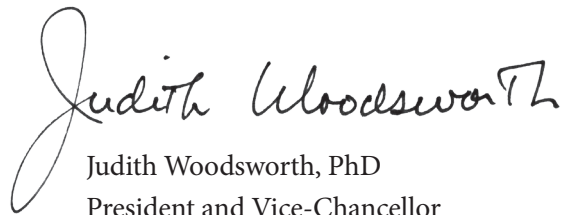
- *building on strengths; and/or*
- *building up weaknesses;*

in order to pursue the greatest possible advantage of opportunities and distinguish the organization from others. (Tecker and O’Neal)

Strategy as actions

A set of actions that . . . sets the priorities for an organization to journey from its current state to a clearly articulated destination and enables the allocation of scarce resources. (Bain & Company)

I thank my colleagues for their leadership in conducting this strategic planning exercise. I am grateful to the hundreds of members of the internal and external community who have taken the time to participate in discussions or submit comments in writing. Concordia is a much richer institution as a result, with a bright future as we reach both up and out.



Judith Woodsworth, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor
June 2009

Informed Decision-Making

Much of the information presented in what follows derives from four years of benchmarking activity represented by *Measuring Excellence at Concordia University*, a compendium of data prepared by our Institutional Planning Office. These facts inform, influence and guide the mission, vision, and values of the university. They help us to define our competitive advantage, and have shaped our strategic goals, objectives and actions.

Some of the assumptions or facts presented will have a direct influence on only a small portion of the Strategic Framework, while others will have a greater impact in that they touch on and affect a number of areas. The following summary proposes some of the links between the internal and external analysis and the directions set out in the plan.

- Diversity
 - The diversity of our student population – their provenance, the languages they speak, their age and status as part-time or full-time students, among other considerations – points to the role we play in society. This is a link to our tradition as well as our continuing mission as an open and accessible university that prepares students for responsible citizenship.
 - Diversity adds richness to the makeup of the university community, but also brings challenges related to core academic skills. This requires us to focus on quality and to implement measures that will facilitate the transition to university life and ensure the success of all students.
- Research
 - Research contributes in many ways to our image and to our ability to attract the best and brightest students and faculty. Many research themes cut across departments and Faculties; some respond to societal need or translate into exemplary institutional practices, such as sustainability which is the object of research in several areas. A variety of measures are required to ensure that adequate support and resources are made available to faculty and students engaged in research.
- Student offerings
 - We offer a range of programs to respond to the interests and needs of students and society; this is a factor in attracting a substantial student population but it also necessitates attention to academic standards and oversight of academic programs.

- Focusing on the student experience and student engagement is the point at which academic quality and accessibility intersect: we reinforce our competitive advantage and lay the foundation for a satisfied and loyal alumni base who will act as ambassadors and supporters of Concordia in the years to come.

External factors

- We fare relatively well in a highly competitive environment, but cannot be complacent: reputational surveys indicate that we require a more robust institutional communications plan.
- In the face of rising costs and tight operating budgets, with relatively flat tuition fees, we have been reliant on enrolment growth. In the long run, the resulting challenges need to be addressed through other measures, such as including an effective enrolment management and financial sustainability plan.
- In the light of shifting economic conditions, we may need to adjust our sights for the Comprehensive Campaign, but effective fundraising must continue.
- Financial support for students is fundamental, particularly with our diverse student body; securing additional funding for graduate students is a priority.

Where We Have Come From

Concordia is a comprehensive university located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Although the roots of its founding institutions go back over 150 years, Concordia University came into legal existence only on August 24, 1974 with the merger of **Loyola College** and **Sir George Williams University**.

Loyola College grew out of the English-language program of Collège Ste-Marie, a French-language Jesuit school founded in 1848. In 1896, it became a separate college and moved to its permanent home in the west end of Montreal in 1916. Loyola gradually evolved from the traditional “college classique” model into a four-year undergraduate liberal arts college. As early as 1918, it had also opened a School of Sociology, the first of its kind in Canada. Innovative programs were introduced, such as Communications, in which Loyola was a Canadian pioneer, and Exercise Science.

Loyola drew its students mainly from the English-speaking Catholic community, but the student body gradually became much less homogeneous as recruitment extended beyond Quebec and Canada. Originally an all-male school, Loyola began admitting women in 1959. In



1958, an Evening Division was formed for those unable to attend on a full-time basis. Responding to the needs of the community, the Evening Division launched new programs such as Library Studies and Community Health Nursing. The Evening Division would later be transformed into Concordia’s Centre for Continuing Education.

Taking its name from the founder of the YMCA, Sir George Williams University originated with evening classes first offered by the Montreal YMCA in 1873. Sir George Williams College came into being in 1926 as a co-educational institution. University-level courses were introduced between 1929 and 1931, and the first day classes were offered in 1932.

“My formative years at Sir George Williams University had a strong influence on my interest in community service and in my belief that university education should be accessible to everyone with the ability and desire to learn. I entered SGWU in 1962 with less than stellar high school marks and I was the first in my family to attend university. Sir George gave me a chance and, like many similar students, I did well there. This was an important lesson for me during my time at Kwantlen University College, which continues to share my interest in the ‘democratization’ of university education. SGWU’s legacy lives on.”

*Leslie “Skip” Triplett,
BA 66*

In 1963, Sir George implemented a Faculty structure, with Faculties of Arts, Science, Commerce and Engineering. A rapidly growing Fine Arts operation functioned within the Faculty of Arts and the existence of an effective institutional media office led to graduate programs in Educational Technology, still important today. With the introduction of graduate programs in 1965, research activity began to expand and research centres were already in place at the time of the merger with Loyola College in 1974.

From the beginning, Concordia has had a major commitment to educating part-time students, with evening students forming the bulk of enrolment. Academic programs have never been seen as either “full-time” or “part-time,” and this integrated approach has remained a cornerstone of our philosophy to this day.

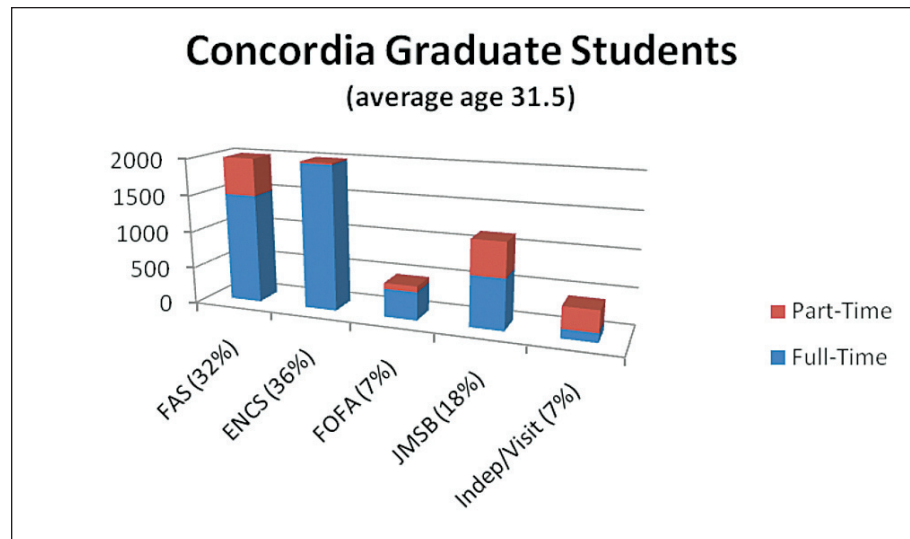
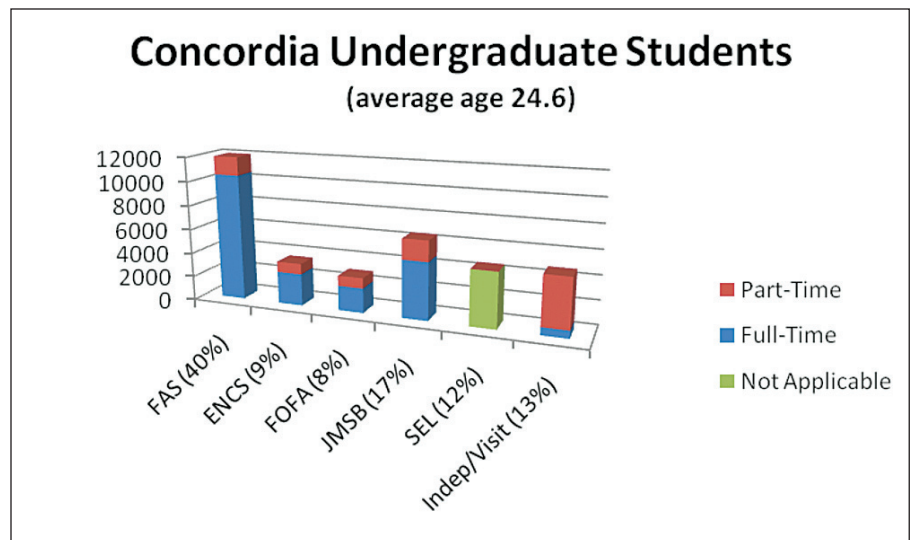


Strategic Analysis: Where We Are Now

Internal Analysis

A UNIQUE STUDENT BODY

A combination of factors makes us unique. We are an English-language university located in Quebec, where the official language is French. By Canadian standards, we have a large student population: among the top twelve in the country. Over the past decade, enrolment has grown by nearly 25%, in line with other Canadian universities but substantially more than the Quebec average of 13%. Students come to us not only to earn degrees, diplomas, and certificates, but also for personal and professional development outside our programs.



“From an academic perspective, Concordia provided me with excellent professors, prestigious scholarships and valuable resources.

On a more personal level, Concordia taught me the real meaning of being a socially responsible citizen by giving me the tools to make society a better place.”

*Gabriel Bran Lopez
BComm 08*

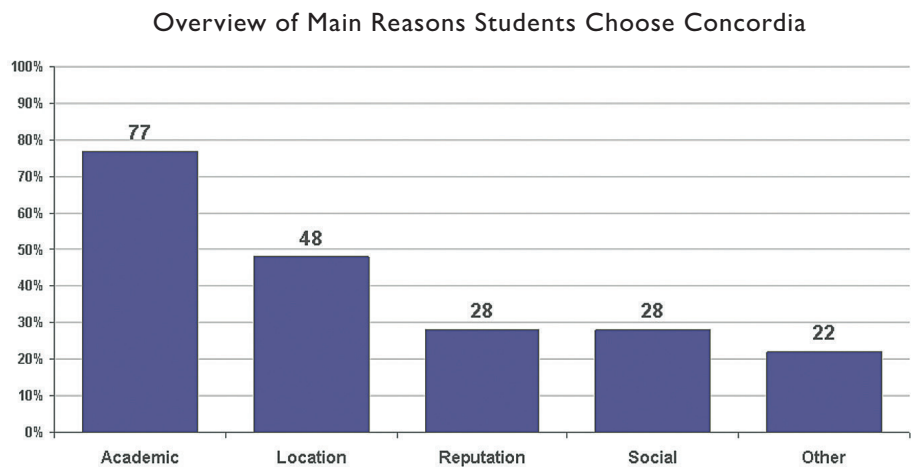
- We have over 44,000 students.
- 77% of our students are enrolled in regular programs; 23% of students are independent, visiting, or continuing education students.
- 37% of undergraduate students and 26% of graduate students study part time; this is a relatively high proportion.
- Most students who come to Concordia from other institutions in Canada do so from Quebec (88% of undergraduate students and 83% of graduate students). Ontario is the origin of 7% and 9%, respectively; about 2% in each category come from British Columbia and Alberta, while 1% or fewer come from the other provinces and territories.
- Of those graduate students who come to us from within Canada, 63% come from Concordia and 17% come from McGill.
- Over 4,000 visa students, representing 11% of students taking credit courses, are citizens of 150 different countries, coming mostly from schools in Asia, the US, Europe, Africa and the Middle East; 25% of our graduate students study on a visa.

We have the second highest proportion of visa students in Quebec, after McGill, representing 16% of the total number of international students attending Quebec universities

- Added to visa students are over 3,000 Canadian citizens and permanent residents, who apply to Concordia from schools outside Canada.
- 15% of our students use a language or combination of languages at home other than English or French, a reflection of the diversity of our student population.
- 75% of first-year students and 70% of our final-year students report not taking part in co-curricular activities, a significantly higher percentage than at other comprehensive universities.
- First and final year undergraduate students work significantly more hours off campus than their peers at other comprehensive universities.

A QUALITY ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

We offer programs at all levels of study. Programs, and related academic considerations, are the primary reason why our applicants make us their first choice.

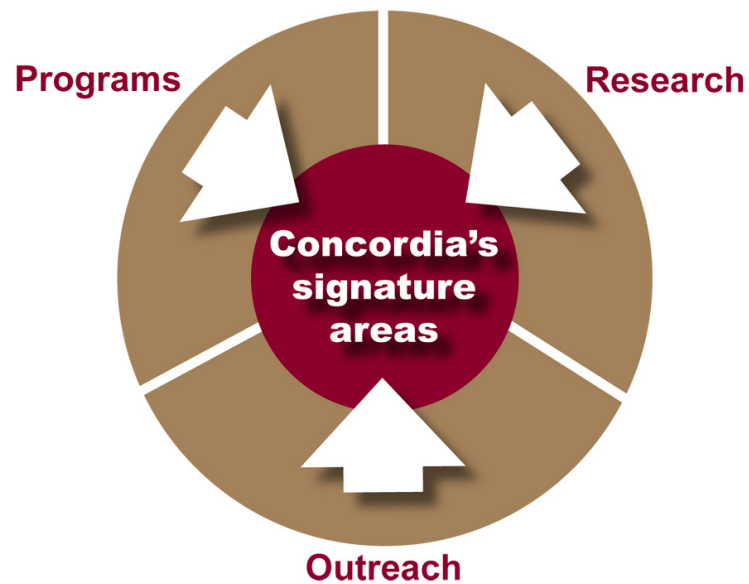


- There are some differences between undergraduate and graduate students in stated reasons for choosing Concordia. Specifically, the reputation of Concordia is cited as important by undergraduates more often than by graduate students (31% versus 18%, respectively).

Top reasons for choosing Concordia:

1. Programs (Undergraduate: 50%; Graduate: 55%)
2. Location—in Montreal, close to work or family (Undergraduate: 46%; Graduate: 39%)
3. Good reputation (Undergraduate: 18%; Graduate: 14%)
4. Friendly place where friends are (Undergraduate: 14%; Graduate: 9%)
5. Cost (Undergraduate: 10%; Graduate: 11%)

- We have over 300 undergraduate programs and 200 graduate programs (including qualifying, individual, and postdoctoral programs).
- Every Faculty has high-demand programs where applications outstrip availability (Film Production, Teacher Certification, Communication Studies and Journalism, Computer Applications and Software Systems, and Accounting, to name a few).
- Programs, research, and outreach converge in our signature areas (to be defined and identified in the implementation phase).



FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

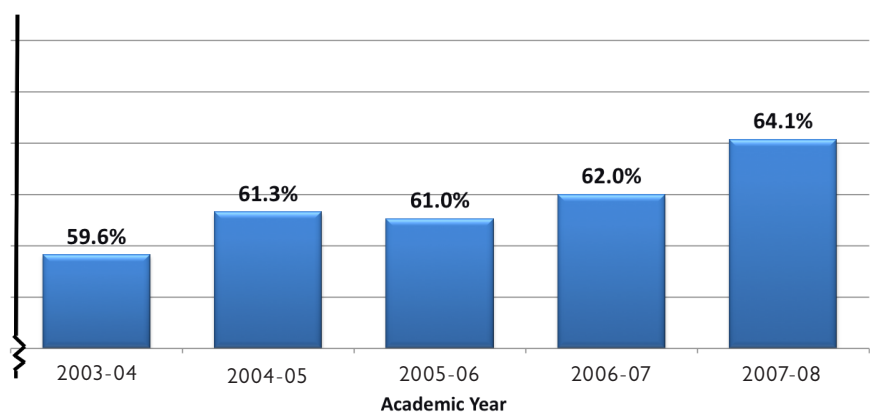
- A total budget of \$433 million in 2007-08, broken down as follows:
 - 54% from the provincial government,
 - 16% from tuition fees,
 - 7% from miscellaneous fees and other income,
 - 6% from the federal government,
 - 4% from ancillary services,
 - 3% from student services,
 - 2% each from donations and the Concordia University Foundation,
 - 1% or less from grants from other sources than provincial and federal, rental properties, net investment income, gain on disposal of assets, and other subsidies.
- \$34.3 million in a restricted Capital Assets Fund; we paid \$13.9 million in bond and brokerage fees last year on our \$200 million bond.
- Canadian universities have \$8,000 less per student to work with than their American counterparts; yet surveys show that students expect more as universities try to do more with less.
- External research funding surpassed \$34 million in 2007-08; 70% of these funds support students.
- A fundraising campaign is under way to secure additional resources.
- Our endowment has tripled since 1998; as of December 2008, the annual campaign had increased by 26.5% over the previous year.
- While Concordia has had a track record of balanced budgets, costs are increasing faster than revenues, posing a significant challenge for financial sustainability.

External Challenges And Opportunities

ATTRACTING STUDENTS AND FACULTY

We have been successful at recruiting excellent faculty, as well as domestic and international students, despite competition and reputational challenges. We may be well positioned to maintain our student base, but we need to consider certain challenges in the current environment.

Undergraduate Students Registration Rate* by First Choice Program

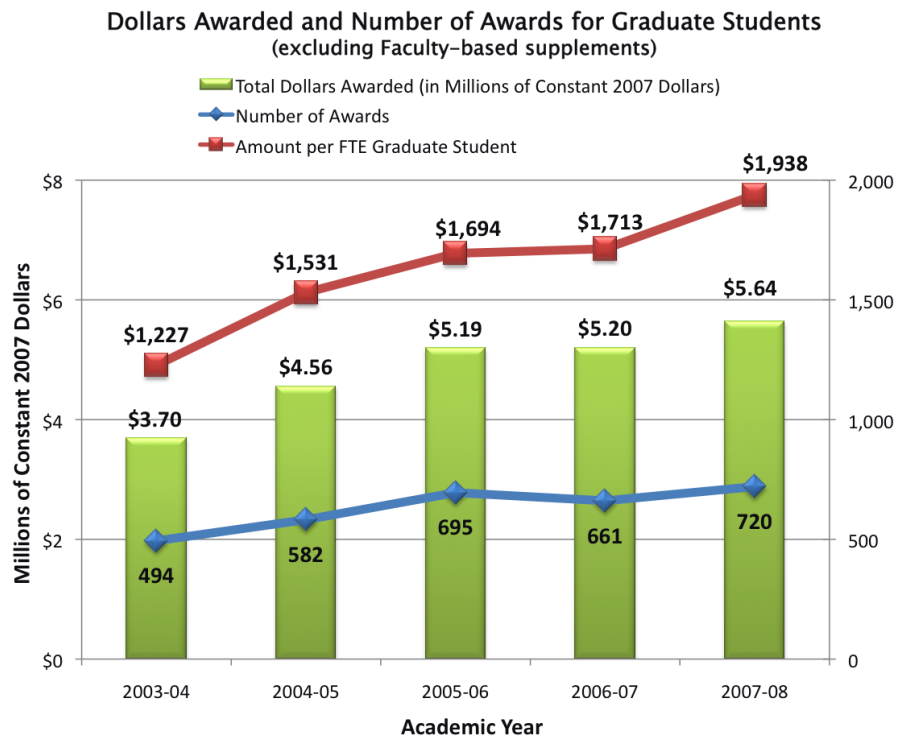


Sources: Concordia University's Portal (Enrolment Services and IITS); Undergraduate Admission Main Report

*The number of registrations divided by the number of acceptances

- 64% of students admitted to their first choice program actually register at Concordia; this is a higher percentage than previously, but there is still room for improvement.
- The number and average amount of graduate funding awards has risen steadily: over \$5,000 for the average award, or \$1,938 per full-time equivalent student; however, this still falls short of our competitors and has been widely identified as a major impediment to recruiting qualified graduate students.
- International student recruitment is becoming more challenging: countries that have been net suppliers of students studying abroad are developing their own capacity (e.g., China, India); and OECD data suggest most international students like to stay within one region of home.

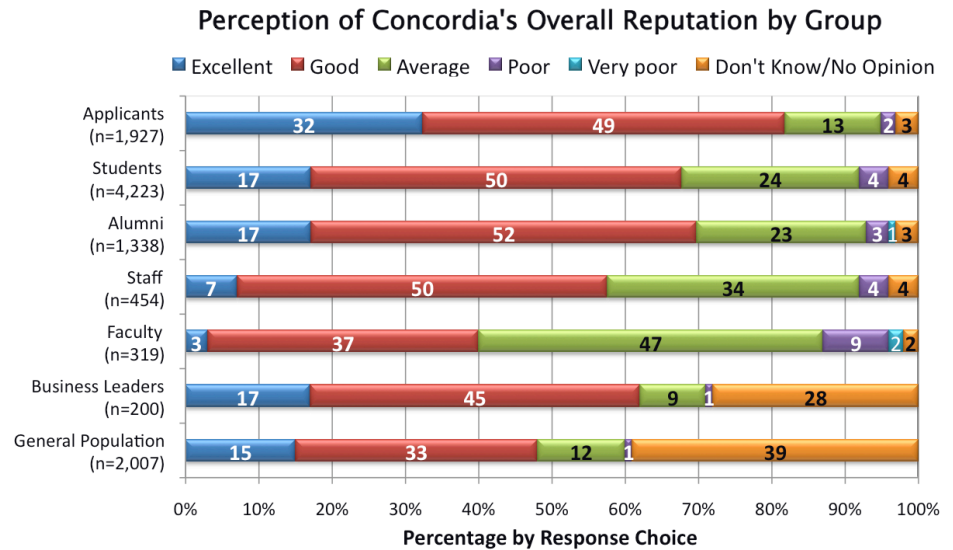
- On the other hand, changes in government policy and regulations may facilitate international student recruitment.
- 524 tenure track professors have been hired in the last decade, with over 81% still working here.



We have gone from having 28% of our full-time faculty in the lecturer and assistant professor category to having 37%. The remaining percentages hold tenure.

The average age of our professors has dropped during that period from 49.5 to 48.8.

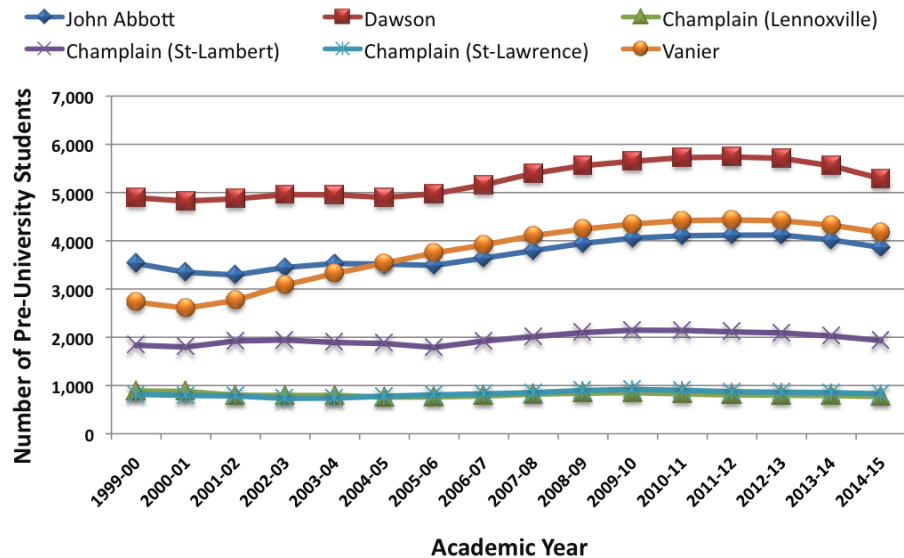
- Student/faculty ratios have improved recently. Using the latest available Statistics Canada data from 2005/06, we were at 27:1, below the benchmark average of 28.5. This is an area that requires constant monitoring.
- Concordia has reputational challenges: 28% of business leaders and 39% of the general population know little about us.



DEMOGRAPHICS

As a result of the so-called “echo-bust”, concerns have been raised about the university-age demographic. But the demographic shift is not uniformly distributed, and the shift will affect some areas more than others. Despite ministry of education projections suggesting a declining applicant pool, we have always maintained a robust ability to attract students.

- Concordia should benefit from higher participation in university education:
 - Urban youth are more likely to attend university
 - A concentration of professors and students in Montreal (second only to Boston) enhances our ability to attract students
- Montreal’s university-age population is projected to increase through 2016, with the older segment continuing to rise until 2021
- Our feeder CEGEPs are not predicting declining enrolment in their pre-university programs until 2013 at the earliest, and many are currently experiencing higher than anticipated application rates



CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The current global economic situation concerns us all. Universities have a responsibility to do what they can to alleviate the situation and prepare members of society for new post-recession realities. Analyses of historic trends suggest that student enrolment increases as the economy weakens, especially in shorter graduate degrees and certificates.

- Our graduates have an employment rate of 94% within two years of graduation, which compares favourably with that of Ontario university graduates
- Higher unemployment rates have historically resulted in a greater number of students returning to school to pursue their studies, particularly in professional disciplines with potentially higher rates of employment (e.g., education, business, and applied sciences)
- On the other hand, individual students attend university for a variety of reasons; preparation for a specific career is not paramount for all students
- The government of Canada projects the country will need 1.42 million new university graduates by 2015 with greatest demand in the areas of natural and applied sciences and health

The Concordia Advantage

- Tradition of openness, approachability, and accessibility
- Innovative programs that attract students
- Montreal location
 - Vibrant and culturally dynamic
 - Linguistic distinctiveness
 - Education cluster second only to Boston
- Concordia's cultural diversity and uniqueness
- Increasingly high standards of teaching, research, and outreach
- Flexible approaches to delivery of education
- Competitive faculty and staff, with low turnover

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

- Continue to build a unique, diverse student body, with a carefully thought out distribution of undergraduate and graduate students across departments/Faculties
- Capitalize on Montreal as a great, global city
- Recruit students, staff and faculty by offering an opportunity to study/work in English, and live in French
- Balance accessibility and increasing quality (including research and graduate programs)
- Enhance and promote signature areas
- Provide an outstanding student experience, and promote opportunities for student engagement
- Maintain strong community linkages and contribute to the betterment of society, at home and abroad
- Build Concordia's reputation accordingly, in verifiable, measurable ways

“My wonderful experiences as a Concordia student included dabbling in music, discussing films and engaging in stimulating conversations about photography. I learned to question, think and find out who I was and what I needed to thrive, blossom and then make my mark.”

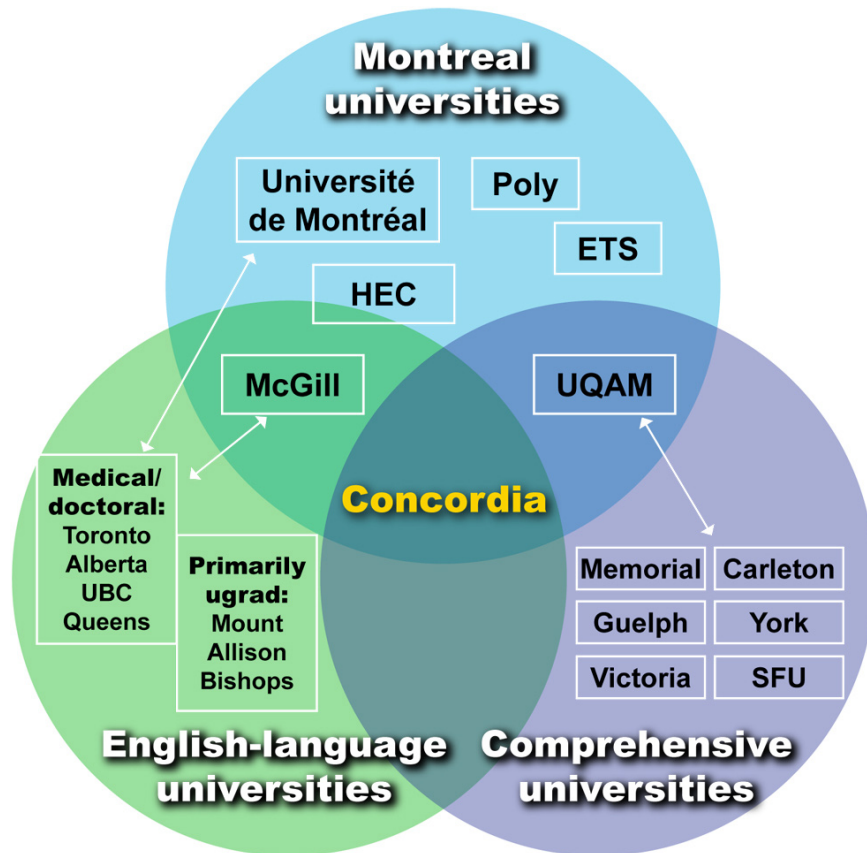
Linda Rutenberg, S BA 74 (music and film), MFA 86 (photography) Photographer, author, educator

COMPETITORS AND COMPARATORS

Concordia is surrounded by obvious competitors. We compete for staff in the local labour market, primarily with other Montreal universities, and with the public and private sectors more generally.

Our principal competitors for undergraduate students are both local and national: Montreal universities and other English-language universities that offer similar programs.

Our competition for faculty is international, and the attraction of U.S. universities poses a particular challenge in many fields.



- **Staff**

- there is a low rate of voluntary attrition among staff;
- 70% of staff would recommend Concordia as a place to work

- **Students**

- Local competition is acute in specific programs (business, engineering, fine arts)
- Graduate student recruitment is hindered by funding challenges

- **Faculty**

- good faculty members have greater local, national and international mobility; faculty are increasingly seeking opportunities to conduct research, and mentor students through teaching and research in advanced degree programs

We draw a distinction between our competitors and our comparators. We compete with both groups, but we are most like the second group, which includes other “comprehensive” universities that have large, well-established cross-town or nearby cousins with medical schools. It is clear that resulting comparisons apply to a greater or lesser extent to individual departments or Faculties, but in this context, we take an institutional view.

- **Comparators**

- UQAM
- Carleton
- York
- Simon Fraser

Strategic Directions

Strategic Imperatives I: Three Strategic Directions

Strategic Imperatives II: Two Supporting Strategies

Implementation

Strategic Imperatives I: Three Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction One

“Good research makes for more up-to-date and alive teaching, while good teaching contributes meaningfully to my ability to clearly communicate my ideas to my peers. I am not alone in seeing these two pursuits as mutually enriching rather than mutually exclusive. In keeping with recent directions in the University, I am convinced that Concordia can and must excel at both of these crucial facets of education.”

*Kristina Huneault
Associate Professor
Concordia University
Research Chair
Department of Art History*

ACADEMIC WORK OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY

Concordia’s traditional mission of strong undergraduate education has been enriched in the past decade through the dynamism and renewal of its faculty. This transformation has also led to the addition of strong and innovative graduate programs in all four Faculties and efforts to stake a place among the leading Canadian research-oriented comprehensive universities. Concordia is committed to enabling faculty to realize their full potential and to creating a culture in which research and teaching are complementary, mutually enriching activities: both are valued, recognized and rewarded.

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Knowledge creation and dissemination are at the very heart of a university: without a rich spectrum of original research, creative activity, and cultural and intellectual exchange, there can be little new to teach.

Strategic priorities

- Foster original research of the highest order
- Encourage work that is connected, where appropriate, to the needs of society and to our students’ aspirations

In order to

- Provide a solid foundation for intellectual life within Concordia
- Strengthen our national and international reputation
- Attract and retain the outstanding faculty members who are the cornerstone of our reputation

Examples of specific actions

- Use the strategic research plan to build on existing areas of strength and provide an environment in which innovative new areas can take root and grow
- Publicly recognize the outstanding achievements of our researchers
- Increase external research funding by providing greater support for funding applications, particularly for large collaborative, strategic and team-based competitions

Examples of specific actions continued

- Reinforce our libraries and their ability to support research activities wherever faculty members and students choose to work
- Make increased graduate student funding an institutional priority for strategic reallocation in the budgeting process and in the Comprehensive Campaign

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Concordia's students set a higher value on the quality and relevance of specific programs than on perceived institutional reputation (see Table page 9: Overview of Main Reasons Students Choose Concordia)

Strategic priorities

- Ensure that our research culture penetrates programs and teaching at all levels
- Create communities of practice and promote energetic discussion about what makes great teaching and effective learning

In order to

- Create a climate in which teachers communicate knowledge with clarity and accuracy, and inspire and guide students in their learning
- Ensure the continued quality and relevance of our programs

Examples of specific actions

- Build on the work and recommendations of the Provost's Working Group on Teaching and Learning to define and develop a clear institutional vision for excellence in teaching and learning
- Create, disseminate, promote and use a teaching handbook
- Systematically upgrade and maintain classrooms, and secure appropriate technology in support of teaching
- Recognize and reward our many outstanding teachers

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To satisfy the evolving expectations of society and our own community, it is important to balance our mission as an open and accessible university with our aspiration for high academic quality and our promotion of research and creative activity.

Strategic priorities

- Ensure that academic programs define and teach core skills such as communication, calculation, presentation, analysis and synthesis
- Guide our students from admission to graduation and beyond, through a successful transition to advanced study or a career
- Provide a gateway to university studies through the School of Extended Learning for students whose potential is clear but whose academic background needs reinforcement
- Using external appraisals and internal review mechanisms, rigorously examine our academic programs, as well as research and creative activities

In order to

- Ensure that our programs meet the needs and aspirations of our students, and continue to attract students of high quality
- Ensure that our academic standards rise measurably over time
- Balance our mission as an open and accessible university with our aspiration for high academic quality and our promotion of research and creative activity

Examples of specific actions

- Define the core academic competencies expected of students and ensure that these are adequately taught and assessed
- Ensure that our signature areas are clearly defined, adequately supported and publicized in our recruitment efforts
- Develop a single teaching evaluation core questionnaire that is as statistically valid and reliable as possible, and improve response rates
- Through the School of Extended Learning, ensure a high level of academic preparedness in all students admitted to programs within the Faculties

Strategic Imperatives I: Three Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction Two

OUTSTANDING STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to ensuring that our students' experience is as rich and rewarding as possible, academically and in other dimensions of their lives.

Strategic priorities

- Provide our students with a high level of academic challenge
- Foster active and collaborative learning
- Encourage student-faculty interaction
- Provide a rich educational environment
- Offer a supportive campus environment

In order to

- Contribute to our students' intellectual, academic, cultural and athletic development and education
- Inculcate vital skills such as analysis and synthesis, critical thinking and reasoning, collaboration and leadership, research and communication
- Promote a culture of academic rigor, diligence and collegiality
- Foster values of diversity, inclusion and mutual respect
- Empower our students in their careers and in their lives

Examples of specific actions

- Improve financial assistance for undergraduate students
- Regularly monitor our students' engagement (using the NSSE survey and other instruments) and act on the results
- Develop and implement an institutional policy on the recruitment, enrolment and retention of students
- Pursue funding and plan for a student centre and athletics complex
- Adopt a comprehensive policy on student academic advising

Strategic Imperatives I: Three Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction Three

«Nous souscrivons d'emblée aux visées du plan, notamment l'atteinte des plus hauts standards en enseignement et en recherche, une expérience étudiante riche et variée, un haut niveau d'engagement de l'Université dans ses diverses communautés et une conscience approfondie de la responsabilité sociale de l'Université. Ce sont là des valeurs qui sont à la fois nobles et réalistes et que les collèges de Montréal partagent à maints égards avec l'Université Concordia. Plus particulièrement, nous nous permettons de vous signaler notre appréciation de la manière dont le plan traite de l'enjeu de l'accessibilité aux études universitaires... »

*—Richard Filion
Président du Regroupement
des collèges du Montréal
métropolitain*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We have always prided ourselves on the depth and breadth of our engagement with our communities, local, national and international, and this tradition remains central to Concordia's institutional makeup.

Strategic priorities

- Promote sustainability and an R4 policy (Rethink, Reduce, Recycle and Reuse)
- Provide opportunities for our students to engage in local, national and international communities
- Integrate social responsibility into our curriculum and pursue co-curricular community-based activities

In order to

- Affirm and renew our leadership in sustainability in what we do within the university and in our interactions with external communities
- Educate students to be globally aware, responsible and committed citizens, and active participants in their communities
- Build stronger and more extensive ties within the many communities of which Concordia and its alumni are a part

Examples of specific actions

- Create a central clearing house for volunteer and service opportunities locally, nationally, and internationally
- Develop a system of incentives for students, faculty and staff to participate in community engagement activities
- Make our expertise and facilities more accessible to community groups and the public
- Integrate sustainability and community engagement into the curriculum where appropriate
- Reduce the 13,471 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions we emit per year and reduce our ecological footprint

Strategic Imperatives II: Two Supporting Strategies

Supporting Strategy One

BEST PRACTICES IN ADMINISTRATION

Our administrative practices must be efficient, transparent, and supportive of our core mission. Our adherence to principles of good governance and accountability will set an enviable example of sound and effective, collegial management.

Strategic priorities

- Ensure a budget process consistent with our strategic priorities
- Foster a supportive human resource culture
- Manage with efficiency, transparency and accountability
- Clarify the roles and accountabilities of participants in all governing bodies
- Communicate decisions clearly and effectively

In order to

- Achieve financial sustainability
- Ensure that we are fulfilling our primary academic mission
- Enhance decisional predictability and administrative stability
- Be recognized as a leader in university administration

Examples of specific actions

- Periodically review and evaluate administrative units and streamline administrative processes
- Initiate and maintain a continuous system of policy creation and review
- Improve career development and training opportunities for all employees
- Provide training, support and orientation for managers, Board, Senate and Faculty Council members
- Promote a collegial approach to employee relations and collective bargaining
- Develop consistent and transparent definitions and templates for budget preparation and reporting

Strategic Imperatives II: Two Supporting Strategies

Supporting Strategy Two

COMMUNICATING OUR SUCCESS

We will effectively communicate Concordia's success within and beyond the University.

Strategic priorities

- Promote activities and achievements that advance our strategic priorities
- Promote our Strategic Framework and its directions

In order to

- Distinguish and differentiate Concordia
- Clarify our objectives and encourage efforts that support them
- Build morale and celebrate our progress
- Increase faculty, student and staff engagement

Examples of specific actions

- Implement a communications plan that emphasizes the salient points of our strategic directions and focuses on the progress made toward achieving the goals set out in the plan
- Publicly acknowledge the success of members of the Concordia community, and link those achievements with the Strategic Framework
- Put in place a structure to ensure the effective coordination and consistency of all Concordia communications

Implementation: Turning Strategic Goals into Plans and Plans into Actions

PROCESS

Strategies must be transformed into actions if they are to have meaning and inform our decisions. The Presidential Panels and the Provost's Committee on Teaching and Learning have generated innovative and concrete measures to help us achieve our goals. This Strategic Framework identifies some examples.

A more substantial action plan will follow, made up of a set of interrelated implementation plans. Each action will be accompanied by anticipated outcomes, assigned responsibility, resource implications and a planned time line. Planning and budgeting will be integrated to ensure that spending priorities are aligned with the accomplishment of Concordia's strategic objectives.

A planning committee will monitor the progress of the strategic initiatives and goals and provide regular reports to the Board of Governors and University community.

The Strategic Framework will be a living, working document, which may be modified from time to time, as objectives are reached and as new challenges or opportunities emerge.



IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

ACADEMIC PLAN: AT THE CORE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Program evaluation

Review of **programs**, streamlining and updating; addition of new programs; deletion of existing programs, according to a framework

Framework for Assessing Programs

1. Preserve core programs
2. Identify signature programs as strengths on which to build
3. Maintain, introduce or delete programs based on academic quality, relevance and competitive advantage, always mindful of our values and mission
4. Remain nimble to be able to adjust quickly
5. Apply a rigorous costing methodology

Flowing from this is a plan for **academic staffing**, over a 3 to 5 year horizon

Enrolment Management

An enrolment management plan will be linked to the academic plan: enrolment will drive the development of programs, and, in turn, the distribution or availability of programs will determine recruitment of students; similarly, questions of academic quality will have an impact both on the recruitment of new students, and the retention of current students.

Research

The University currently has a Strategic Research Plan: what is required is a set of actions needed to operationalize it and integrate research activities into the teaching process and activities of students.

Internationalization

Also key to the academic plan is the need to set target markets for student recruitment. We will seek to recruit students from outside Quebec and establish best practices for supporting and retaining international students. We will develop effective two-way student mobility programs to enhance academic programs, and foster further international cooperation, faculty mobility and international research collaborations.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Financial sustainability is included in our strategic imperatives. We will need to develop a more integrated multi-year resource plan that sets out spending related to programs, and cost management that can be measured comparatively, with projected revenues associated with different sources of student enrolment and other activities.

Associated with the financial plan:

- a plan for the Comprehensive Campaign, with links between fundraising capability and the University's strategic priorities
- a plan to fund long-term capital investments
- a Government relations plan, and strategies for obtaining our fair share of public funding from three levels of government

HUMAN RESOURCES PLAN

The Human Resources Plan will set out mechanisms for recruiting and retaining high calibre staff and faculty; training and supporting them, and ensuring a respectful, harmonious workplace.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Infrastructure Plan will review existing facilities and their utilization, with a view to determining the need for maintenance, renovations, and new construction in accordance with student demographics, and program and research requirements,

- taking into account the Grey Nuns Motherhouse as a centrepiece for planning for the next 5-10 year horizon

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

As the implementation plans are developed, the various actions and initiatives will be prioritized and costed. In some cases, funding will be an issue whereas in others human resources will be critical.

The annual operating budget will be driven by the overall strategic goals set out in the Strategic Framework, but since there is not a lot of discretionary funding available in the operating budget once our contractual obligations are met, it will be necessary to reallocate resources. In addition, a strategic planning reserve will be set up in order to encourage and support new initiatives.

Accountability will also be key. In the implantation plans, the person most directly responsible for each area will be identified, along with the person(s) or group(s) with whom she or he will have to work or consult. Although individuals will have responsibility for specific plans, however, it will be essential to integrate the planning so that the larger goals of the institution can be advanced in the most efficient manner possible.

One of the most important challenges to implementation is the changing environment. There are critical risk factors, some of which have been mentioned in the strategic analysis section: shifting demographics, changing public policy, competition from other institutions for students, faculty and public support, and the economy both locally and globally.

MONITORING AND REPORTING: MEASURES AND INDICATORS

The University has developed a set of measures (Appendix B) that enables us to situate ourselves in comparison to other institutions and to measure our progress not only against our competitors but against ourselves.

We will use them in reporting the extent to which we have been successful in achieving our targets in our regular reports to the University community and the Board of Governors.

Appendix A

PRESIDENTIAL PANELS

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Mandate	To review existing structures, information and feedback from Open Consultations, World Cafés, the Strategic Planning website and written communications to the President, and to conduct such targeted inquiries as it deems appropriate to determine immediate-to-medium-term actions, along with required resources, if any, to enhance the student experience at Concordia.
Chair	Dr. Donald Boisvert, Associate Professor & Undergraduate Advisor, former Dean of Students

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Mandate	To review existing structures, information and feedback from Open Consultations, World Cafés, the Strategic Planning website and written communications to the President, and to conduct such targeted inquiries as it deems appropriate to determine immediate-to-medium-term actions, along with required resources, if any, to enhance employee relations and engagement at Concordia.
Chair	Mr. Roger Côté, Associate Vice-President, Enrolment & Student Services

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Mandate	To review existing structures, information and feedback from Open Consultations, World Cafés, the Strategic Planning website and written communications to the President, and to conduct such targeted inquiries as it deems appropriate to determine immediate-to-medium-term actions, along with required resources, if any, to enhance the level and effectiveness of Concordia's community engagement.
Chair	Mr. Russell Copeman, Associate Vice-President, Government Relations

Appendix B

INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

We measure the progress of our academic and administrative functions over time either against other institutions (using generally accepted third-party data or responses from validated survey instruments) or against our own past performance.

Below are a few sample indicators:

	EXTERNALLY VALIDATED	PROGRESS AGAINST OURSELVES
ACADEMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External awards won by our students • Engaged learning practices • Retention and graduation rates • Student satisfaction • Graduate employment success (MELS “RELANCE” data) • External research funding/awards • Research outcomes and dissemination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching quality, based on student responses to course evaluations • Retention and graduation rates • Duration of studies and continuation rates (graduate students) • Course and program costing • Graduate employment success (Concordia sponsored)
ADMINISTRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VPS: Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) • FS: Improved administrative efficiency, measured against other Quebec universities • UCS: Improvement in reputational survey • AAR: Regular contact with an increasing target percentage of alumni • AAR: Increased proportion of internal and external stakeholders who are donors • ER: Increased targeted funding for Concordia • VPS: Reduced cost of operation of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FS: Progress towards addressing long-term financial liabilities • HR: Greater employee satisfaction with service levels • HR: Improvements in leadership and succession planning • UCS: More frequent media appearances by a higher proportion of faculty • IITS: More rapid delivery of service improvements to users • IITS: cost savings through site license deployment and standards

LEGEND

- VPS: Services
- FS: Financial Services
- UCS: Communications Services
- AAR: Advancement and Alumni Relations
- ER: External Relations
- HR: Human Resources
- IITS: Instructional and Informational Technology Services

Since 2006, the university has created and updated *Measuring Excellence at Concordia University*, a document that presents a series of indicators. It is released each spring, continually refining our ability to access comparative data in order to guide our decision-making.