

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

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Originating Office: Board of Governors

Supersedes /Amends: N/A

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- State Concordia University's long-term commitment to be a leading higher education institution in sustainability.
- Define guiding principles that will assist in the integration of sustainability in all levels of strategic planning and activities.
- Develop a common understanding of sustainability and facilitate innovative, interdisciplinary and interdepartmental sustainability initiatives.
- Support action at Concordia on global and local sustainability issues.
- Promote sustainability as part of a Concordia education.

SCOPE

This Policy shall apply to all activities of Concordia University ("the University"), on and off campus, and to all members of the University community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The University will be guided by the following sustainability principles:

Access to knowledge

Measures favourable to interdisciplinary education, teaching, access to information and research are encouraged to stimulate innovation, raise awareness and ensure effective participation in the implementation of sustainability.

Biodiversity preservation

Biodiversity preservation for the benefit of present and future generations through the protection of species, ecosystems and natural processes.

Economic efficiency

Financial management that is responsible and conducive to social and environmental well-being.

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Environmental protection and enhancement

Protecting and supporting resilient natural environments is an integral part of all activities.

Equity and diversity

Embracing a practice of equity and respecting diversity through solidarity with global and local socially discriminated communities.

Health and quality of life

Embracing the symbiotic relationship between a healthy environment, human health and quality of life.

Participation and commitment

Engaging all members of the community to work towards and enrich the community's vision of sustainability.

Precaution and prevention

Assessing and evaluating environmental, social and economic risks and taking preventative, mitigating, and corrective actions, recognizing the importance of taking action at the source.

Protection of cultural heritage

Cultural heritage, which includes property, sites, landscapes, documentation, and Indigenous forms of tradition and knowledge reflects the identity of a society and passes on values from generation to generation. Protecting, preserving and promoting the diverse cultural heritages that have ties to Canada while recognizing indigenous voices throughout history and that their culture is tied, inherently, to sustainability and the protection of all earth's systems.

Respect for ecosystem support capacity

Considering and respecting the support capacity and vulnerability of ecosystems, while cultivating their resilience.

Responsible production and consumption

Recognizing and adjusting production and consumption practices to be both socially and environmentally responsible.

Subsidiarity

Powers and responsibilities delegated to the appropriate level of authority and decision-making should be adequately distributed. Consultation is integral to the decision-making process.

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DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

“Sustainability” at Concordia is a mindset and a process that leads to reducing our ecological footprint and enhancing social well-being while maintaining economic viability both on and off campus. This process of sustainability is developed through a governance system based on shared vision and responsibility that fulfills Concordia’s current needs without compromising the needs of future generations. To be sustainable in our decisions and activities is to take a long-term perspective, recognize resource capacities and balance the interconnected nature of our environment, society and economy.

The *“University Community”* includes:

- All registered students
- Faculty members of all categories
- All administrative and support staff
- All members of the executive leadership and governing bodies at the University
- All separately incorporated organizations operating on campus
- All students/faculty members visiting or using University facilities
- Anyone residing on campus

For the purpose of this policy, the *“Campus”* is defined as all physical spaces over which the University has operational and/or financial control.

POLICY

1. Commitments

- The University will adopt sustainability as a core value through its strategic planning, commitments, actions and communications.
- The University will maintain, support and periodically review the functioning of the Sustainability Governance Framework.
- The University will communicate and promote this Policy to all members of the University community through various channels and awareness building activities.

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- The University, in consultation with its community, will develop long-term sustainability plans with sustainability goals and measurable indicators as part of its organizational planning.
- The University will work with its various academic and non-academic sectors to create implementation plans with specific key performance indicators to achieve viable sustainability goals. Progress will be monitored and periodically reported to the Sustainability Governance Framework and to the University community, in the spirit of accountability and transparency.
- The University administration will support the implementation of sustainability in its activities with appropriate resources.

2. Responsibilities

- All members of the University community should take into account the Guiding Principles and Commitments stated in this Policy as related to their activities at the University.
- Members of Concordia's President Executive Group (PEG) are responsible for the implementation of the Policy's commitments within their respective portfolio of activities with the input of Concordia's Sustainability Governance Framework.

3. Concordia University Sustainability Governance Framework

Mandate: To provide strategic direction and make recommendations with respect to integrating sustainability within Concordia University's decision-making process.

Structure: Composed of the Sustainability Advisory Committee and three sub-committees. Each sub-committee consists of representatives from students, staff and faculty members.

Sustainability Advisory Committee

Members: Vice-President, Services (Chair)
Vice-President, Advancement & External Relations
Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Vice-President, Research & Graduate Studies

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Chief Communications Officer
Student Representatives (2)
Full-Time Faculty or Library Representative (1)
Staff Representative (1)

Key functions: Conducts strategic planning and develops recommendations with respect to policy and plans, including resource allocations and reporting.

Sustainability Sub-Committees

a. Operational and Environmental Sustainability (OES) Sub-Committee

Chair: Vice-President, Services
Key functions: Advises on energy and resource management, environmental sustainability, and environmental safety.

b. Campus Sustainability Engagement (CSE) Sub-Committee

Chair: Chief Communications Officer
Key functions: Promotes both the engagement with the university community and the coordination of internal sustainability initiatives and activities.

c. Teaching, Learning and Research Sustainability (TLRS) Sub-Committee

Co-Chairs: Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs or delegate and a Full-Time Faculty Member appointed by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Key functions: Advises and promotes teaching, learning and research sustainability activities.

The Sustainability Advisory Committee and each Sub-Committee shall develop Terms of Reference that sets out the administrative and operating procedures for the committees. The Terms of Reference shall include information on membership, terms of office, roles and responsibilities of members, and meetings. The Terms of Reference of the Sustainability Advisory Committee are approved by President's Executive Group, whereas the Terms of Reference of the sub-committees are approved by the Sustainability Advisory Committee. Terms of References are reviewed at least every five (5) years.

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REVIEWING PROCESS

This Policy shall be reviewed every five years by the Sustainability Advisory Committee with input of the University community.

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

In its commitment towards sustainability and to help shape a sustainability mindset, the University takes into consideration key sustainability-related frameworks, at different governmental levels, among others:

- [Talloires Declaration](#)
The University is a signatory of the Talloires Declaration since 1995 to highlight the important leadership role of universities in tackling the challenges of achieving sustainability.
- [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
The SDGs are a set of international action-driven and concise goals established to help drive the implementation of sustainable development at all levels.
- [Planetary Boundaries Framework](#)
First introduced in 2009 and updated in 2015, the Planetary Boundaries framework represents internationally-recognized developmental and operational safe zones for humanity. Concordia recognizes these boundaries and how they translate into operating challenges and opportunities for its community.
- [Canadian Environmental Protection Act](#)
This Act governs air, water and other forms of pollution prevention. Regulations on toxic substances that are a risk for the environment as well as human life and health are addressed as well.
- [Quebec Sustainable Development Act](#)
The Act describes guiding principles to guide the actions of the public service.
- [Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities](#)
Article 7 of the Charter highlights the positive impact of sustainability on society.