

Faculty of Arts and Science

FAS 2025 *A living document*

Table of Contents

Preamble	2
Executive Summary	3
The Starting Point: Who we are	4
The FAS Vision and Ambition Based on Shared Values	
Our Ambition: FAS 2025	
How will the FAS achieve its goals?	
Decision making principles	
Activating the Multiplier Effect	5
The FAS Will Reimagine	
FAS Will Own the Budget	
Transformative Actions	6
PSI: The Pluri-Studies Institute	
The Mapping Project	
The Curriculum Renewal Project	
The Beyond Project	
The Learning from Others Project	
The Mind the Gap Project	
La Francophonie Project	
The LabLife Project	
The FAS Digital Project	
Forward and Beyond	11
Integration Table	12

Preamble

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to present **FAS 2025, A Living Document**. This is the result of thorough in-person consultations with more than 130 people from our Faculty, as well as contributions from all our units involving hundreds of people. **FAS 2025** accounts for what we have heard during our consultation process and synthesizes what seemed to matter most to our constituents. The ideas, initiatives and projects presented in this document are a reflection of our broad community and the document as a whole reflects the vision of our Faculty in all its powerful diversity. Our document has resulted from a collective effort with contributions from all corners of our Faculty. In this spirit, the projects outlined here are presented as flexible, porous and open opportunities; they are neither definitive nor prescriptive. We hope that you will see that the document has been designed to provide room to breathe and space to build.

FAS 2025 represents an invitation to our constituents to initiate, develop and propose ideas that will further our vision. This Living Document offers flexibility—one of our key principles for action—and is structured to evolve over time. Our specific objectives and projects will be defined, refined and reviewed as we move forward. **FAS 2025** is a framework for action and a springboard for initiatives that will harness the power of our Faculty. As we have said many times during the course of the past year, this is the time for Arts and Science.

We hope that your reading of **FAS 2025** will inspire you to take part in this exciting journey.

Executive Summary

The Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) has worked in collaboration with its 27 units to develop this strategic plan and to shape and articulate its future directions.

This document was generated as the result of a consultative process that started with a questionnaire sent to all academic units on October 23, 2015. This was part of Phase II of the Concordia University (CU) strategic planning exercise. Formal workshops with academic unit heads as well as consultation meetings with professors, staff and students were conducted by the FAS decanal team from January to April 2016 in order to engage the FAS community in reflection upon potential future directions and the transformative actions we might take to align the FAS plan with the nine Strategic Directions of Concordia University. The data gathered during the consultation phase, as well as the results of Phase I, represent the foundation of this report.

The report is divided into five (5) sections:

1. The Starting Point-Who we are: clarifying our decision-making processes and the FAS 2025 vision and objectives.
2. Activating the Multiplier Effect: explaining how actions are interconnected and the ways in which we will reimagine our academic mission.
3. Transformative Actions: identifying projects to which all FAS units may contribute.
4. Forward and Beyond: inviting our community to think as a collective to ensure the constant evolution of our Faculty.
5. Integration table: presenting how our projects meet CU's nine strategic directions.

This report defines where we are at the present moment in our process. This is, in fact, a living document, by which we mean that our community will continue to be active in crafting our directions through the development of pilot-projects and experimentation. As we continue to collect ideas for initiatives from our constituents, we will recalibrate our priorities and review our actions to ensure that we realize our objectives while maintaining flexibility for change and innovation.

The Starting Point: Who we are

Created forty years ago, the FAS has evolved to become

- a federation of foundational disciplines
- a generator of fundamental knowledge and scholarship
- a vibrant research environment
- a platform for flexible methodologies
- an engine for interdisciplinary experimentation
- a Faculty with connecting hubs with its colleges, institutes and schools.

In 2016, the FAS is a federation of energized, engaged and committed people who incite and generate imaginative exchanges and actions in research and teaching, in learning and discovering.

The FAS will harness the power of its diversity, of its breadth and of its depth to create new ways of imagining the academic and research experience.

The FAS Vision and Ambition Based on Shared Values

Excellence, creativity, knowledge sharing, flexibility, fluidity, diversity, inclusivity, engagement, social justice, integrity, transparency and pride.

Our Ambition: FAS 2025

Be a uniquely defined powerhouse of interdisciplinary teaching, learning and scholarship in Canada and beyond.

How will the FAS achieve its goals?	Decision making principles
Incentivize change	Transparency
Experiment with pilot projects	Accountability
Leverage community partnerships	Convergence
Align international initiatives	Flexibility
Foster collaborations	Sustainability
Be visible, be known	Synergy

Activating the Multiplier Effect

Every action and project should be imagined and designed in a way that benefits both the immediate agents of the initiative and the FAS as a federation. Projects that have simultaneous, positive impacts on multiple sectors or constituents enact a multiplier effect. Initiatives should be interconnected and impactful in the short term, with the potential to scale up or expand in the future if successful. Ensuring that we have transparent and effective processes to establish and facilitate proposed actions will be crucial to our success. With this in mind, the FAS is committed to review and improve upon our processes and structures of governance in order to make best use of resources and of energy and time.

The FAS Will Reimagine

In the quest to achieve its ambition, the FAS will embark on a path to reimagine its academic mission. The FAS will engage in the task of positioning itself as a leader in rethinking:

- the Inter- / Trans- / Multi- / Pluri-disciplinary approach to the academic mission;
- the academic curriculum and its delivery;
- the student experience as we move into a blended environment of academic initiatives;
- the cutting-edge research that will harness strengths and creativity within and across disciplines;
- the places and events for the meeting of minds and creation of meaningful experiences;
- the processes, procedures and governance for an efficient and thoughtful way of working.

FAS Will Own the Budget

The Faculty of Arts and Science must have the power to secure and mobilize its budget in a strategic manner. The development and enactment of a strategic and well-planned approach to the management of scheduling, enrolment, retention, curriculum, facilities and workload will be essential to achieving a productive use and allocation of the Faculty budget. In developing the mechanisms by which we can have agency over our initiatives by achieving control over our budget, the FAS must ensure that the preservation and augmentation of a profound student experience remains at the core of our mission and actions.

Transformative Actions

The FAS will create banners under which initiatives will be launched and implemented. These banners are called projects and they are meant to provide opportunities for our constituents to propose and lead projects with the support of the Faculty and of the University. The initiatives to be supported will be determined according to the FAS principles of decision-making named earlier (p.3). As the projects are umbrellas, the future directions of the FAS at Concordia will have some fluidity and flexibility. The success of the initiatives and projects will depend on the creativity of FAS people as they engage in the enhancement and transformation of the academic experience at Concordia. The creation of incentives to think beyond and to reimagine the next generation of the university will play a critical role in how our Faculty will evolve. While keeping in mind that each initiative will have a pilot and test phase, investments from the FAS into resourcing will be carefully gauged and monitored.

Here are a few examples of projects, and ideas of what they could entail as we move into the future.

PSI: The Pluri-Studies Institute

The FAS is proposing to create the *Pluri-Studies Institute (PSI)*, a think-tank that bridges learning and scholarship with meaningful and impactful actions. It will act as an incubator for pilot projects that reach beyond the established curriculum. *PSI* will function as a platform for the coordination of interdisciplinary work by assembling people, facilitating and testing new approaches to research and pedagogy, maximizing exposure of innovative FAS projects. *PSI* will foster creativity and innovation to develop projects, partnerships and initiatives that will emphasize the complementarity of our 27 academic units and will harness potential collaborations with other Faculties.

PSI will function as:

- an incubator to test and scale up ideas for achieving interdisciplinary research and curriculum;
- a hub for collaborative experimentation and a testing ground for new ideas and methodologies;
- a convener of faculty and students from around the world to advance knowledge and know-how;
- a flexible and low-cost coordinating body that facilitates potential connections and fosters unrealized interdisciplinary teams;
- a core initiative to project the FAS as a powerhouse of interdisciplinary teaching, learning and research in Canada and beyond.

The Mapping Project

Before launching new initiatives, the Faculty will make a thorough assessment of its current position and of its assets and practices. Mapping will apply to curriculum, recruitment and retention practices, research initiatives, local and international partnerships, administrative processes, as examples. The Mapping Project will enable us to determine the current state of affairs and will allow us to maximize our present efforts and to re-examine our practices with the aim of facilitating our operations, reducing prominent obstacles and leveraging what we are doing well.

Mapping our local, national and international collaborations and alliances will also help the FAS to identify and leverage areas of strength and to optimize the deployment of resources to support initiatives.

For instance, we will map:

- community involvement by our students, staff and faculty;
- international projects and relations (MOUs, student mobility, research partners, co-authorship, ...) to assess levels of intensity in these activities;
- *cotutelle* projects and strategically initiate new partnerships;
- curriculum and courses in order to create mechanisms that will facilitate and accelerate curriculum design, review and renewal and to foster interdisciplinary exchanges across units and programs within the Faculty and beyond;
- the readiness gap for prospective students, for staff in a changing higher education landscape, and for faculty as they enter university life;
- research and graduate program activities and capacities;
- space, academic facilities and infrastructures.

The Curriculum Renewal Project

Teaching for tomorrow means revisiting how we design our programs to ensure that we are providing meaningful experiences to our students both within and beyond the walls of our university, and that students are developing the skills and competencies that they will need to succeed in higher education and in their life after graduation. The FAS will review its current programs and curricular offerings in order to address unnecessary duplication, to ensure that core disciplinary instruction is provided and to realize greater interdisciplinary, experiential and entrepreneurial approaches to teaching and learning.

For instance, we will pursue opportunities to

- embed ethics, sustainability, indigenous studies and entrepreneurship across Faculty curriculum;
- create knowledge integration programs and platforms;

- define principles to integrate Experiential Learning in Faculty curriculum and explore various forms of student experience that are best suited for a diversity of programs;
- create new interdisciplinary programs (e.g. migration, food, aging, law and society), complementary streams of research and provide incentives to engage in such initiatives;
- collaborate with other Faculties to develop cross-cutting academic programs that will promote new ways of thinking about the academic experience;
- explore the possibility to develop joint programs with choice universities in the world and to lead innovative academic initiatives.

The Beyond Project

The FAS is very active within the community at all scales from the metropolitan area of Montreal through the national scene to the international level. To optimize our efforts in community engagement we will need to look for convergence of actions and for the benefits of long-term involvement. Going beyond means looking at problems, themes and issues from multiple angles and engaging in conversations that lead to new ways of articulating and solving real-world problems that demand active and interdisciplinary interventions. The FAS will look Beyond Disciplines, Beyond the Walls and Beyond Frontiers to achieve its ambitions.

The FAS will

- raise the profile of *Beyond Disciplines*: a series of provocative conversations on current societal issues for students, staff, faculty and the community;
- strategize and optimize its community engagement initiatives;
- engage in meaningful and deep relationships with selected community partners;
- leverage institutional positioning in connecting with external organizations, and pilot, develop and establish International Graduate (Summer) Schools;
- test and launch Field Schools (with other Faculties).

The Learning from Others Project

The expansion of our thinking beyond (both within and outside our walls) will be essential if we are to become a national powerhouse of interdisciplinarity. In the FAS, we value human systems dynamics and the capacity of each constituency to teach and learn from another. Opportunities to learn from others should be multiplied across the Faculty for all of its constituents. This project builds on the pilot initiative for academic units to learn from another unit in North America through a site visit. The results of these visits have been extremely positive and

productive, demonstrating the need to expand this project into other areas such as:

- a high profile speaker series under the PSI umbrella;
- a program of mobility initiatives for students and faculty as part of FAS Beyond Frontiers;
- learning from alumni by connecting them with current students through in-depth interviews;
- mentorship programs for students, staff and faculty that will also involve community partners;
- a new FAS co-op and internship program;
- testing and developing projects for lifelong learning and professional development.

The Mind the Gap Project

Through this project, the FAS will enhance the preparedness of students, staff and faculty in relation to the fast-changing landscape of post-secondary education. Gaps will be identified and documented through the Mapping Project and we will take actions to fill them. For example, the FAS may:

- test and develop learning boot-camps to enhance student readiness (in language, writing, numeracy, science, university life, remediating the gap between perceptions and reality...);
- partner with CEGEPs (*passerelles*, student readiness, integration);
- implement an integrated recruitment strategy in co-ordination with the three other Faculties and the School of Graduate Studies;
- enhance services and academic supports for Indigenous students;
- explore the possibility of offering programs to new immigrants to Québec;
- organize grant writing workshops for faculty and students;
- improve and simplify processes and procedures to become more transparent, efficient and accountable;
- match high quality personnel with research activities;
- offer flexible use of space, academic facilities and infrastructures.

La Francophonie Project

Concordia is located in a francophone city and province. The proportion of Francophones in our student population is rapidly increasing. We also have numerous exchanges with universities in the Francophonie. Concordia and the FAS could be a gateway to and from the Francophonie. The FAS will initiate new recruitment initiatives and augment its activities *en français* in response to this demographic reality.

- Enhance: Franco CEGEP outreach (recruitment and partnerships between Concordia and CEGEP professors);

- Develop a FAS international strategy and begin with France as proof of concept;
- Initiate a FAS version of the “*Faire le grand saut*” (adapted from the structure developed by JMSB).

The LabLife Project

The FAS has a rich and extensive laboratory culture in all of its academic sectors. This is a unique and defining feature of our Faculty. The FAS needs to instill a culture that promotes the role of the laboratory experience in our scholarly endeavors and builds from exchanges within and across sectors. We need to bridge knowledge and to facilitate an intellectual cross-pollination of our laboratories. The lab culture also emphasizes hands-on experience and team work that should permeate the intellectual environment of our Faculty. Through this project, the FAS will bring **interdisciplinarity** to life by creating learning hubs—living labs—for the community.

- Phase 1: Map all lab activities and identify their impact within and across each academic sector;
- Phase 2: Co-Lab (sharing labs to do research differently): linking our labs with other labs both nationally and internationally;
- Invite international Grad students for a LabLife Summer Field School (summer 2016).

The FAS Digital Project

The FAS wants to go beyond and increase its accessibility for current and future communities of scholars, students and alumni. The Faculty wishes to grow its visibility and showcase the talent of its constituencies. To achieve these goals we will:

- test the student digital portfolio concept;
- optimize the use of Explore Concordia and transform it to better reflect the multidimensional identities of researchers;
- develop and test ideas for MOOCs that will enhance the FAS-Concordia reputation and presence in the academic arena on the world stage.
- pilot a Digital Labs platform;
- embed Digital Labs in a renewed curriculum at all levels;
- plan optimal integration of digital approaches and resources into the classroom;
- enhance the integration of digital learning into the student experience.

Forward and Beyond

The Faculty of Arts and Science will define itself through projects that leverage one another so that they are all interconnected. As such, the multiplier effect of our actions will both ignite and be ignited by the ability of our constituents to imagine new possibilities. From the mapping project to the integration of numerous other projects, the FAS will meet its objective of becoming the powerhouse of interdisciplinarity in Canada and beyond.

This living document is an invitation to our community to think as a collective and suggest ideas and endeavors that will demonstrate our pride in who we are, what we do, where we want to go and ultimately: build a strong and exciting identity for the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Integration Table

Strategic directions/ FAS Projects	PSI: The Pluri- Studies Institute	The Mapping Project	The Curriculum Renewal Project	The Learning from Others Project	The Mind the Gap Project	La Franco- phonie Project	The LabLife Project	The Digital Project
Double our Research								
Teach for Tomorrow								
Get your Hands Dirty								
Mix it Up								
Experiment Boldly								
Grow Smartly								
Embrace the city, Embrace the World								
Go Beyond								
Take Pride								