



STRIVE

STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST
RACISM AND IDENTITY-BASED VIOLENCE

FINAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm pleased to announce the Standing Together against Racism and Identity-based Violence (STRIVE) Task Force has completed its work. I invite you to take some time to read the final report, which includes detailed summaries of the findings from each of the six subcommittees as well as topic-specific and global recommendations.

The university launched STRIVE in April 2024 in response to a period of heightened tensions on our campuses, often due to geopolitical conflict. The goal of STRIVE was to shed light on experiences of inequity, exclusion and discrimination as well as to propose actionable recommendations to address these challenges going forward. The task force went on to carry out a two-year study of identity-based violence and how it affects members of the Concordia community.

The final report reflects the collective efforts of the task force and its subcommittees on antisemitism, anti-Arab racism and islamophobia, anti-Asian racism, transphobia, campus engagement, and campus climate, which were made up of faculty, staff and students. Each group led consultations, held listening sessions, conducted surveys, and produced a frank and thoughtful analysis of what they found.

The working group reports were synthesized into a comprehensive draft report. A steering committee, which included the heads of the working groups as well as other internal and external members of the Concordia community, reviewed versions of the report and provided input on the final version.

By design, the STRIVE recommendations are focused on what we can do internally at Concordia, both now and in the future, to better ensure an inclusive, respectful environment for everyone.

The mandate of STRIVE was complex, because the task force was asked to look at many intersecting issues that affect multiple groups in different ways. Inevitably, some findings in the final report reflect divergent perspectives that may seem contradictory at first glance. But overall, the report provides a nuanced understanding of the harm caused by identity-based violence at Concordia and in the wider society of which the university is a part. Importantly, it offers several proposals intended to support the university community in its efforts to address identity-based violence going forward.

I accept the call to establish an implementation and community response committee, which will be constituted in the coming weeks. Its primary mandate will be to help us consider the recommendations, prioritize possible next steps and explore how existing resources can be leveraged for greater impact. The committee will communicate updates as it is able.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the STRIVE co-chairs, the subcommittee members and everyone who participated in the process. Given the difficult nature of the topics, I know the experience was not always easy. Your leadership, courage and willingness to share your insights are deeply appreciated.

The next phase of our work to prevent and tackle identity-based violence begins now. Thank you for your ongoing support of this initiative as we continue the work to encourage a shared culture of respect, understanding and care at Concordia.



Graham Carr
President and Vice-Chancellor

I. INTRODUCTION

Concordia is home to a diverse array of communities that interconnect, overlap and, at times, come into conflict. Like all higher education institutions, the university reflects – and is continually shaped by – the broader social dynamics of the society in which it exists. In this context, it plays a critical role in addressing issues like identity-based violence (IBV), systemic discrimination, polarization and conflict as they pertain to campus life.

In response to these challenges, and with the understanding that meaningful change requires both active engagement and institutional introspection, Concordia President Graham Carr launched the university-wide [Standing Together against Racism and Identity-based Violence \(STRIVE\) Task Force](#) to oversee and coordinate the work needed to address IBV and identify existing and new approaches to enhance belonging at Concordia.

The Task Force’s mandate was to explore and recommend tools that enable the university to navigate these challenges while reinforcing and enhancing a sense of community on campus.

As part of this process, it was critical to acknowledge and respect the diversity of viewpoints across Concordia’s communities to ensure divergent voices were reflected in our work. It was also essential to carefully distinguish between identity-based violence, systemic discrimination, hate and controversial speech, while also identifying and responding to circumstances that encourage their overlap.

STRIVE also recognizes that Concordia is located on unceded Indigenous lands and has sustained relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities on the Island of Tiohtià:ke (Montréal) and its surrounding areas. The Task Force’s efforts to address IBV take into account this history and draw upon the work of Concordia’s [Indigenous Directions Action Plan](#) (2021) and the [President’s Task Force on Anti-Black Racism](#) (2022).

Against this backdrop, the Task Force presents its final report, which captures the concerns, experiences and hopes of Concordians regarding identity-based violence. It offers recommendations to address present-day challenges and bolster the strength of the community, while highlighting the university’s capacity to meet future challenges. Some of the content in this report may be difficult for some readers. Please use discretion and prioritize your well-being.

MANDATE AND GOAL

As President Carr outlined in his April 4, 2024 [message to the community](#), Concordia is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive and open environment where everyone can fully participate in university life.

The Task Force’s work drew on Concordia’s rich source of knowledge and diversity. It also reflected this diversity through its structure and consultation activities to ensure its efforts and recommendations address the local and global concerns central to fostering a sense of belonging at Concordia. The Task Force complements existing programs and services supporting equity and inclusion on campus in addition to identity-based violence prevention efforts.

This involved assessing, analyzing and recommending new policies and initiatives, as well as exploring ways to improve existing ones. To ensure the final recommendations reflected the feedback gathered, the Task Force engaged directly with the Concordia community and consulted with internal and external partners. This included soliciting perspectives from within the university, the broader Montreal community and institutions in Canada and abroad.

The Task Force began its work by identifying major themes and inviting various communities to participate, forming subcommittees to explore specific challenges, needs and perspectives. The subcommittees were led by and comprised of Concordia community members (faculty, staff and students), mandated to observe and give voice to experiences of, and possible solutions to, identity-based violence. They did this by first entering an extensive consultation phase with other university members. After this phase, their focus shifted to implementing concrete measures to improve the lived experiences of marginalized groups at Concordia, which would, in turn, benefit the entire university community. Their observations and proposals for next steps were then shared with Concordia leaders and representatives and are further detailed in this report.

These activities support the Task Force’s goal of ensuring Concordia has the tools and structures needed to respond to a climate of increasing polarization while also drawing strength from its diversity.

This report presents recommendations centered on policies, initiatives and related issues requiring examination. It also delves into concerns pertaining to campus experiences and assesses university dynamics more broadly, including campus engagement and campus climate.

While some of the forthcoming recommendations or opinions may appear contradictory, they reflect the complexity of the current environment across the university. The following observation from the **Campus Engagement subcommittee** demonstrates the diverging and diverse viewpoints that emerged during STRIVE consultations:

“Although the topic of protests was not a specific focus of our consultation questions, it was frequently raised. Some respondents viewed protests as threats requiring strict enforcement, while others saw institutional responses as suppressing dissent. Perceptions varied widely, shaped by political empathy, personal experience and institutional response, with debates over legitimacy and the risks posed. Many considered protests as more of a nuisance than a threat. Notably, some participants interpreted increased security measures and institutional response as a reason to be worried.”

The Task Force’s role was not to choose sides or let conflicting opinions negate each other. Instead, STRIVE sought productive paths forward for the communities involved, situating recommendations along a spectrum rather than in opposition to each other.

It is important to acknowledge the complexity of this work and the challenge of maintaining balance at the project’s core, which is shaped by diverse perspectives and the needs of the broader community. To achieve this, the Task Force prioritized consistent and fair processes to develop recommendations that foster an environment where the entire community can thrive. While STRIVE’s findings do not surface all the answers, they do offer a roadmap for positive change.

APPROACH

In ideal circumstances, the Task Force would not have undertaken its work during such a socially charged moment. However, the current geopolitical climate and incidents of identity-based violence on campus heightened the urgency and necessity of this work. It became increasingly clear that, as a community, Concordia must commit to building the systems needed to effectively confront identity-based violence and racism, regardless of current events, divergent views or personal beliefs.

This framework guided STRIVE’s approach. It was not the Task Force’s intention to provide reactionary, situation-specific solutions. Instead, thoughtful research, consultation and reflective analysis were used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of Concordia’s different communities and provide a sustainable way forward.

It is also important to recognize that each community is composed of subcommunities, and the Task Force aimed to represent the diverse voices within them. It also recognizes that community members exist at the intersection of many identities, belong simultaneously to many groups and navigate a sense of belonging accordingly. Consequently, the Task Force applied an intersectional approach that values these overlapping identities throughout its work.

Concordia’s two campuses add further complexity to the Task Force’s work, as they represent distinct environments with differing needs across areas such as security, services and facilities. The centrally located Sir George Williams campus is vibrant and highly accessible, yet closely tied to broader downtown challenges, including a deepening housing crisis and strained social services. Issues of precarity are less visible at the Loyola campus, which – while still in Montreal – offers open areas and quiet green spaces. These contrasting contexts also shape the frequency and forms of identity-based violence experienced and witnessed.

STRIVE’s goal was to identify ways to improve the daily experience of as many Concordia communities as possible, while avoiding a reductive approach to the complex experience of identity.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The STRIVE Task Force consisted of a steering committee led by three co-chairs and subcommittees that included students, staff, administrative leaders and faculty. All participants were deeply committed to this process and to shaping a more inclusive, empowering and supportive university environment for the entire Concordia community.

To better understand the university’s needs related to addressing both overt and covert forms of identity-based violence, the Task Force conducted its work through subcommittees that focused on six initial areas:

1. Campus Engagement
2. Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia
3. Anti-Asian Racism
4. Antisemitism
5. Transphobia
6. Campus Climate

The Task Force recognized that each subcommittee faced unique realities and challenges, and that everyone involved, including STRIVE members, were directly affected by the important issues they were addressing.

A detailed overview of STRIVE’s membership and governance structure is provided in the appendix at the end of this report.

PROCESS

The subcommittees conducted in-depth examinations of their focus areas, with careful attention to specificity and intersectionality. They examined issues such as microaggressions, hate, exclusion, erasure and profiling, and considered how these issues intersect and relate to one another within the broader university context.

Each subcommittee conducted its own community consultation and research, tailoring its approaches to be intentional and specific. Through these activities, subcommittees developed a range of recommendations that form this final report. The Task Force then identified global recommendations where possible, while also highlighting specific recommendations relevant to each community.



II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Task Force's community-based outreach marked an important evolution in how institutional challenges are understood and addressed, though it also presented some notable constraints.

By grounding the process in the lived realities of specific communities, the outreach brought greater context, depth and concreteness to the concerns shaping daily life for many students, staff and faculty. Equally important was the way this engagement tapped into the pride participants feel in their identities, languages, cultures, subcultures, practices and histories. This pride also became a source of insight, revealing strengths, traditions and community-based forms of solidarity within Concordia. While the recommendations that emerged are rooted in an examination of particular forms of identity-based violence, their relevance extends well beyond a single issue or group, offering guidance that can help address a variety of concerns and ultimately strengthen the university community as a whole. Collectively, these efforts highlight areas needing immediate attention and those requiring further study, laying the groundwork for deeper inquiry, more responsive policies and ongoing partnerships with communities whose experiences are essential to shaping a more equitable and inclusive university environment.

At the same time, the process revealed limitations in what could be captured. In 2024, the campus community was comprised of approximately 42,000 members (students, faculty and staff). Despite this, the subcommittees' work was constrained by the small number of participants in several identity-based activities, reflecting to a certain extent the ongoing under-representation of many of the communities, and pointing to broader challenges around engagement. Community involvement with the Task Force varied from strong collaboration in some areas to non-participation in others, resulting in the absence of important perspectives in the observations. This uneven engagement limited the Task Force's ability to fully understand experiences across the university or determine whether concerns differ between the Loyola and Sir George Williams campuses. Limited trust in the university – and by extension, STRIVE – also contributed to participant challenges.

Despite these challenges, those who engaged with STRIVE brought a wide range of definitions, viewpoints and interpretations of the issues affecting their communities. Many participants observed that, while structured exercises are useful, they cannot fully capture the complexity, nuance, or, at times, contradictory nature of people's concerns, priorities and lived experiences. These limitations underscore the need for ongoing engagement, expanded outreach and more flexible methodologies to better reflect the multifaceted realities shaping community well-being.

Finally, the need to ensure privacy and confidentiality while meaningfully representing the issues in a collective report necessitated a balancing act that, for some, led to feelings of erasure, unevenness or silencing. In fact, privacy and confidentiality concerns led some Task Force members to step down. Their contributions are appreciated. Where possible, additional details from the subcommittees will be shared with the president and provost.

This brings us to the purpose of this report: to document, after in-depth inquiry, the experiences of communities on campus, and provide a foundation for ongoing and future action.

III. CONCERNS REGARDING IDENTITY-BASED VIOLENCE

Despite participation constraints, each subcommittee created spaces where participants could voice concerns that, in many cases, might not have been expressed otherwise. By sharing what was often painful to name, individuals demonstrated a deep commitment to collective well-being and the values that shape Concordia's community life. Their willingness to speak honestly allows the university to confront hard truths while continuing the work of making both campuses safer, more accountable places for everyone.

Below is a summary of participant feedback based on concerns raised during the consultation phase. Selected quotes are organized by theme and attributed to the relevant subcommittees. Those reported by participants to have engaged in IBV include community members (students, faculty and staff) as well as external actors, visitors and organizations. Identifiable participant details have been omitted.

The specific concerns listed below are further explored in Section V.

CAMPUS CLIMATE IMPACTS

- Loss of collegial relationships and alienation from friend groups due to the discovery of identity and/or the combination of identity factors and social context (**Antisemitism**).
- Abandoning studies/work and/or restricting presence on campus due to feeling unwelcome, exposure to bias and/or lack of availability of identity-informed services and experiences (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Transphobia**).

DISCRIMINATION AND HOSTILITY

- Micro-aggressions as opposed to overt acts of racism (e.g., assumptions about where ethnically and culturally minoritized university members are from, exposure to model minority stereotypes, or conversely, assumptions about experiences of struggle and hardship, surprised reactions when fluency in French and/or English is demonstrated) (**Anti-Asian Racism**):

"While pursuing my graduate studies, I remember standing in a circle along with the rest of my classmates, doing an activity. The seasoned white male professor stood in the middle of the circle and asked us to all engage in improvisation. He asked the white students to improvise

words. They spoke in English. He asked the Francophone student to improvise in French; she spoke in French. When it came to me, he asked me to 'Speak a language.' I spoke in English. He said, 'No, another.' I then spoke in English. He said, 'No, speak in YOUR language.' And I said, 'I don't speak another language.' (For context, I do speak another language, but I did not want to perform this for him)." – Anti-Asian Racism

- Assaults on members belonging to an identifiable group (e.g., spitting, shoving and more serious forms of physical assault). In some reports, assaults and threats were accompanied by threats of sexualized violence, highlighting the intersecting harms experienced by minoritized women and trans and gender diverse community members (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism**):

"A Palestinian student, targeted and identifiable as such, was violently, assaulted [...] resulting in a fractured sinus wall and hospitalization. The assailant yelled anti-Arab slurs during the attack." – Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia

"There were a few times where people...spit on [the place where we were sitting or standing] and asked me why I don't support Palestine." – Antisemitism

- Discriminatory statements and slurs directed towards an identifiable group. In many cases, the statements were directed exclusively toward a specific community. In others, they were bound up in broader expressions of hate towards several minoritized groups and referenced race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, etc. (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Transphobia**):

"People were calling me and the other students 'Nazis' or 'genocide lovers' or 'baby killers.' I've also heard people say the K-word to my face on campus. A lot of slurs are being used." A faculty member similarly reported that another faculty member had referred to Zionist colleagues as 'child killers.'" – Antisemitism

"Really horrific stuff [on a Discord chat] and it was seriously impacting the cohort...Really sickening. N-word everywhere, very transphobic, very homophobic, but also images of dirty Jews... things you would have seen in 1930s propaganda but updated for the internet. Really, deeply offensive stuff, like Auschwitz jokes." – Antisemitism

“We were struck, in particular, by the resignation expressed by both students and staff, including a staff member who shared the following comment about their regular encounters with violent transphobic discourse: ‘more often, I just have to hear some boomer yelling right outside my office about ‘the fucking transgenders’ or cracking jokes about what ‘procedure’ someone’s getting when they are out sick.’” – Transphobia

- Graffiti and property damage targeting an identifiable group (**Antisemitism**).
- Stereotypical narratives and harmful conspiracy theories targeting an identifiable community (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism**).
- Normalization or escalation of identity-based microaggressions and hostility (**Anti-Asian Racism, Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Transphobia**).

EXPRESSION AND ADVOCACY ISSUES

- Political expression and advocacy dovetailing with anti-Jewish racism (e.g., invoking classical and contemporary antisemitic tropes, frames, conventions and actions) (**Antisemitism**).
- The labelling or framing of legitimate political expression and advocacy as discriminatory or hateful (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia**).
- Censoring or suppressing advocacy and solidarity efforts by and on behalf of an identifiable group (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia**).
- Labeling legitimate advocacy and protest on behalf of an identifiable group as criminal or terroristic (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia**).

IDENTITY IMPOSITIONS

- Holding an identifiable group collectively responsible for state actions and/or requiring members of an identifiable group to justify and/or explain state actions (**Antisemitism**).
- Asking or requiring members of an identifiable community to act as the representative for a specific identity (**Anti-Asian Racism**):

“At Concordia, I situate myself as being visibly East Asian and somehow, a representative of this identity. For anything related to DEI, the weight of shouldering this task becomes mine, especially when I am the only non-white person in the space. I do not choose to represent all Asian or non-white voices, and yet I feel that I am asked to do so in many Concordia spaces.” – Anti-Asian Racism

- Erasure and flattening (**Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Anti-Asian Racism, Antisemitism**):

“Arab’ is a broad ethno-linguistic term that encompasses a diversity of faiths (including but not limited to Muslim, Christian and Jewish) and regions (sometimes delineating only people of the Arab Gulf, other times all Arabic speakers from Morocco to Iraq). ‘Muslim’ is a yet wider term, organized around a set of core beliefs and practices, yet which can also capture an array of interpretations and expressions. Moreover, identity markers may be more visible (such as Muslim women who veil) or less obvious (some Muslims from Eastern Europe, for example, may be ‘white presenting’). Further still, these experiences and markers intersect in complex ways with others, such as Blackness for Muslim and/or Arabic-speaking community members with roots in parts of Africa south of the Sahara.” – Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia

“As a South Asian woman, I generally feel excluded from the umbrella of ‘Asian.’ I think we need to be more specific about who is included when we talk about Asians, as generally, people assume it to mean East Asian. I also feel that as South Asians, we can experience anti-Asian discrimination as well as Islamophobia and misplaced anti-Black racism all at the same time. These experiences do not neatly fit into the experiences of East Asians, nor Black, nor Muslims, so we need to ensure surveys like these are also inclusive if they are meant to include all Asians. This survey felt more specific to East Asians. And that’s okay if it was the intent. But then other surveys could or should be developed for others. We also need to consider whether Asian includes West Asians (Persians, Turkish, etc.) Given the targeting of Korean, Indian and Turkish students for deportation in the United States, it’s also vital that we remember these communities are incredibly diverse and different from one another but equally vulnerable.” – Anti-Asian Racism

“Jews come in a variety of configurations, and there is great diversity among Jews in their places of origin, religious belief and practice, culture, connections to other identities and political affiliations, which includes a diversity of stances toward the modern place of Israel and its government. Over the past two years, Zionist and anti-Zionist have been treated as binary terms, but that grossly oversimplifies a complex range of attitudes, ties and political views about Israel and Palestine. Even the use of these labels is complex. There are, for instance, those who identify as Zionist and engage in solidarity with Palestinians and identify as progressive; there are those who identify as anti-Zionist with family who live in Israel; and there are those who identify as neither Zionist nor anti-Zionist. Cultural, religious and political relationships with Israel and Palestine are as diverse as any other features that define Jewish identity.” – Antisemitism

- Insistence and/or implicit pressure that members of identifiable communities adopt the “right” stance or position on issues, thereby erasing the existence of viewpoint diversity within minoritized groups that dominant cultures enjoy without question (**Antisemitism**).

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

University relationships with businesses, service providers and organizations that directly harm specific communities **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia)**:

“A Palestinian consultation participant reported that campus groups allied with one such organization, ‘... routinely called Palestinian and Palestinian-aligned students “Nazis” and used language that conflated “Palestinian” with “terrorist” at every opportunity. She told us how even calling for ‘ceasefire’ or to ‘end the siege’ is habitually ‘treated as pro-Hamas rhetoric.’” – Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia

- Need for more diversity in decision-making and leadership within and around the university **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Anti-Asian Racism, Campus Climate, Transphobia)**.
- Tokenism and performativity in university initiatives and activities. Tokenism, as elaborated by the Anti-Asian Racism subcommittee, is the practice of asking minoritized communities to represent an identity-based perspective in order for the requesting body to appear inclusive, but with no corresponding intent or commitment to change the circumstances negatively affecting these communities **(Anti-Asian Racism, Transphobia)**:

“Concordia urgently needs to let go of the narrative that it is a safe liberal institution and become the institution that is most willing to redefine what an institution is: informed by both relevant research and marginalized communities. Transphobia is gaining traction across North America, and we will need more from our colleagues than unisex bathrooms. We need them to understand that we are a target for anything from ire to violence, and to be prepared to support and defend us.” – Transphobia

- Lack of care for some minoritized communities in messaging and actions from the university **(Anti-Asian Racism, Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Campus Climate)**.
- Prioritization of care for certain identity-based groups while failing to support others **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Campus Engagement, Campus Climate, Transphobia)**.
- Denial of the existence, legitimacy and/or aspirations of an identifiable group **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Transphobia)**.
- Denial of systematic human rights violations of an identifiable group **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia)**.
- Concerns that diversity of viewpoints and mixed opinions would not be reflected in this report, and by extension, affect the recommendations therein **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Anti-Asian Racism)**.

SERVICE GAPS

- Lack of identity and culturally informed services, supports, facilities and spaces **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Anti-Asian Racism, Antisemitism, Transphobia)**.
- Lack of centralized hubs containing resources and information for specific minoritized groups **(Anti-Asian Racism, Transphobia)**.

SURVEILLANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

- Hyper-surveillance and disproportionate contact (in frequency and degree) with security and policing bodies **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Transphobia)**:

“While our focus here is on the surveillance in washrooms, we want to emphasize that the increased securitization of the university over the past two years has had an outsized impact on transgender and gender diverse (TGD) students [...] One former TGD student shared [...] that they dropped out of their program because the heightened surveillance on campus was undermining their mental health.” – Transphobia

- Weaponization of safety to stifle the right to engage in challenging discourse and debate **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia)**:

“We must [...] use extreme caution not to define “safety” in a way that compromises academic freedom, thus undermining the university’s core mission, even while preserving in equal measure the tenets of mutual-respect, shared humanity and evidence-based debate. In other words, short of demonstrable falsehoods, fabrications, propaganda and dehumanizing language, students must learn to accept encounters with uncomfortable truths and non-normative viewpoints as part of the university experience. – Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia

- The dismissal or minimization of the right to a secure environment of work and study **(Antisemitism)**.
- A heightened and restrictive application of accountability and disciplinary policies and procedures based on membership in an identifiable community. In some instances, this occurs regardless of the political and social context; in others, this practice increases in times of conflict and polarization **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism)**.



TARGETED THREATS

- Hacking of personal information and recording community members participating in cultural, religious and/or legitimate political activities with the intention to harass or enact reprisals (e.g., doxing) **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Campus Climate)**.
- Hiding one's identity and/or related symbols to avoid exposure to discrimination, hate, or reprisal **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Transphobia)**:

"[The current climate] has led some Jews to hide, or at least consider hiding, their Jewish identity. One student told us very frankly, 'I don't openly share [the fact that I'm Jewish]. I wouldn't wear a Magen-David to class.' Another student wrote in their online questionnaire, 'Being Jewish on campus means tucking my mezuzah [necklace] when I enter campus. It means being unsure who I'm safe to tell I'm Jewish in group projects.'" – Antisemitism

"Many students practiced 'masking,' or hiding their trans identities, to avoid conflict – some even allowing misgendering to occur out of fear of potential harassment. Masking was mainly reported when students felt a lack of support. Students found themselves weighing the benefits of freely expressing their gender identity against the risks of discomfort and harm associated with visibility, a paradoxical set of conditions that is often first faced in childhood." – Transphobia

- Policing of symbols and clothing denoting cultural, ethnic and/or religious affiliation **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia)**.
- The targeting of events hosted by identifiable groups or spaces marked as belonging to a minoritized community for group actions, vandalism and/or attack **(Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Antisemitism)**.

Pryor, J. T. (2015). Out in the classroom: Transgender student experiences at a large public university. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(5), 440–455. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0044>

Goldberg, A. E., & Kavalanka, K. A. (2018). Navigating identity development and community belonging when "there are only two boxes to check": An exploratory study of nonbinary trans college students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 15(2), 106–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2018.1429979>



IV. COMMUNITY SCAN

CAMPUS SURVEY

On October 2, 2024, the Task Force distributed a university-wide survey to students, staff and faculty asking about their views and experiences with identity-based violence (IBV) on campus as part of its engagement efforts. The initial deadline for responses was October 21, 2024, and later extended to November 15, 2024. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. All responses were treated with the strictest of confidence and used only to produce aggregate results. Before reporting, the survey platform, Qualtrics, automatically flagged and removed duplicate responses and those likely to have come from bots. For the purpose of this survey, IBV was defined as follows:

“A continuum of acts motivated by the perpetrator’s perception of their target’s identity. It can be based on factors such as race, gender, sexuality, religion, or political affiliation. This type of violence manifests in various forms and intensities, including but not limited to microaggressions, threats, systemic discrimination, hate crimes, extremism and genocide. It impacts both individuals and communities, and one does not have to be a member of a targeted community to have experienced or be concerned about IBV.”

The survey was sent to 42,785 active Concordia community members, including students, faculty and staff. A total of 4,382 respondents completed the survey, representing a 10.24% response rate. This sample size of 4,382 respondents yields an estimated margin of error of plus or minus 1.48 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Some overlap between students and employees may have occurred. For example, if someone is both a student and an employee, they may have been included in both invitation lists if different email addresses were on file.

Questions regarding experienced or observed IBV were presented only to respondents who indicated that they had personally experienced or observed IBV; therefore, these results reflect a subset of the total sample. In contrast, questions related to campus inclusivity and opportunities to engage with the Task Force were available to all respondents. In addition, some surveys were left incomplete; however, the analysis indicates that the responses to the questions answered are still valid and accurate.

The results should be interpreted as a snapshot of perceptions and experiences of IBV at Concordia, rather than a statistically representative sample. Participation patterns stemming from the survey’s voluntary nature may have led to higher response rates from individuals belonging to certain groups. This, in turn, has the potential for some subgroups to be more prominently reflected in the data. The insights are therefore most useful as a tool for gaining a general understanding of the campus climate regarding IBV.

It is also important to acknowledge the nuances and complexities within and between identity groups, such as overlapping demographic categories and differing interpretations of how IBV is experienced or perceived. These subtleties may influence how respondents understand, report and classify IBV according to the survey’s definitions.

Among respondents, 79% were students, 14% were staff, 8% were faculty and 3% preferred not to specify. Overall, 30% of respondents reported having only observed IBV, while 1% reported having only experienced IBV. An additional 16% indicated that they both observed and experienced IBV in a Concordia space (n=4,158). This pattern suggests that direct experiences of IBV are reported far less frequently than observations, implying that individuals may be less likely to disclose or recognize personal experiences compared to incidents they witness involving others.

Other notable responses included:

IDEAS TO MAKE CAMPUS MORE INCLUSIVE (N=3,035)

- **52% felt that increasing accountability and/or disciplinary measures would be effective** (e.g., apology, restorative justice, formal warnings, suspension, dismissal) in addition to those already in place such as the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. 48% of respondents indicated that reviewing processes, such as complaint mechanisms and dispute-resolution procedures would make the campus more inclusive.
- **38% of respondents favoured increased training and awareness about IBV.**
- **20% of respondents proposed other ideas**, with 7% of this subgroup proposing to reduce or remove the presence of police or security on campus.

WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH THE STRIVE TASK FORCE (N=2,922)

- **66% of respondents preferred surveys** as the primary method for providing feedback and suggestions to the Task Force regarding IBV, while 56% favoured confidential online feedback.
- **30% said they would like to see a dedicated person** affiliated with STRIVE within a department or faculty.

WHERE PEOPLE EXPERIENCED OR OBSERVED IBV AT CONCORDIA (N=2,240)

- **66% of respondents reported experiencing IBV in an open campus space** such as corridors, lobbies, seating areas and courtyards. Classrooms were reported as the second-most likely location at 28%.
- **24%** reported experiencing IBV at a student association event.

TYPES OF IBV EXPERIENCED OR OBSERVED (N=2,094)

- **Microaggressions were the most reported form of IBV at 59%**, followed closely by hate speech at 58%.
- **47% reported experiencing harassment**, while 37% reported threats.
- **7% of respondents also shared their own examples of IBV**, including in areas not captured by the initial subcommittees. Notable examples of this subset include:
 - Sexism/misogyny: 24% experienced, 8% observed
 - Ableism: 11% experienced, 5% observed
 - Anti-Black racism: 16% experienced, 15% observed
 - Anti-Quebec/anti-French discrimination: 4% experienced

SOURCES OF IBV EXPERIENCED OR OBSERVED (N=1,916)

- **49% of respondents reported students were the source of the IBV they experienced**, while 25% indicated that the behaviours originated from a student association or group.
- **18% of survey respondents noted that faculty members engaged in IBV.**
- 10% reported other sources. Of this subset, respondents noted:
 - Police or security bodies: 27%
 - Non-students or outsiders: 9%

FREQUENCY OF IBV OBSERVED OR EXPERIENCED AT CONCORDIA (N=1,876)

- **38% of respondents said they rarely saw or experienced IBV**, while 24% reported observing or experiencing it on a weekly basis.
- **17% responded monthly**, while 10% said they observed or experienced IBV daily at Concordia.

THE IMPACTS OF IBV ON CAMPUS (N=1,855)

- **63% said IBV decreased their comfort attending campus**, while 62% reported reduced engagement in campus life.
- **46% said IBV impacted their relationships with others**, while 44% said it affected their focus and concentration.
- Of the 12% of respondents who offered their own examples of how IBV has affected their Concordia experience, the following were noted:
 - Decreased sense of safety/physical security: 19%
 - Decreased mental health/well-being: 16%
 - Less trust/respect for the university: 13%

FORMS OF IBV EXPERIENCED OR OBSERVED (N=2,639)

- Respondents were asked to specify the forms of IBV they experienced or observed in relation to the subcommittees' focus areas:
 - Anti-Arab Racism: 13% experienced, 41% observed
 - Anti-Asian Racism: 6% experienced, 13% observed
 - Antisemitism: 14% experienced, 33% observed
 - Islamophobia: 12% experienced, 37% observed
 - Transphobia: 5% experienced, 16% observed

V. RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON SUBCOMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

The Campus Engagement subcommittee focused on two streams of consultation: one that explored instances and spaces where healthy dialogue is currently taking place on campus, and one that examined institutional safety measures and how individual experiences with security practices shape perceptions of safety on campus.

For the healthy dialogue stream, the subcommittee disseminated a short survey through a QR code to identify places/spaces where Concordians are currently experiencing healthy dialogue on campus. In total, the subcommittee received 240 responses. Of these 197 (82%) identified as students; 23 as staff (10%); 11 as faculty (4%); and 9 as other (4%). The higher response rate among students can be attributed to the extra effort put into recruiting student participants. The subcommittee then used the survey results to identify 10 case studies, which it further explored through conversational interviews. Case studies were chosen based on those tagged by respondents multiple times as having experienced healthy dialogue in the setting or interaction. They represented a cross-section of units, faculty and staff who embody this.

To explore experiences and perceptions of safety, the subcommittee held a series of targeted student, staff and faculty focus groups, which were complemented by an anonymous survey for those who preferred to contribute their input in writing. Nine focus groups were held with participants from diverse campus sectors: 3 with staff, 2 with faculty and 4 with students. A total of 53 individuals participated: 8 faculty members, 18 staff members and 27 students. Groups ranged from 3 to 10 participants, with each session lasting two hours, offered in-person and online. For the survey, the subcommittee received 128 responses and 1 written response via email. Participation rates were 52% staff (66), 23% faculty (30), 23% students (30) and 2% holding multiple roles (e.g., staff and student) (3).

Despite different data collection methods, both consultation streams faced similar challenges in engaging the community and motivating people to respond. Initially, the subcommittee relied on institutional channels for promotion (Concordia's website, newsletters and digital screens), but when these resulted in very low response rates, it supplemented with more direct outreach, including targeted communications within its networks and in-person distribution of postcards.

The Campus Engagement subcommittee emphasized that healthy dialogue on campus relies more on shared values that shape how people show up to difficult conversations than on rigid protocols. Interviewees consistently noted openness, curiosity and a willingness to make mistakes as essential conditions for learning. They highlighted the importance of self-awareness – recognizing one's positionality and power – as well as modeling vulnerability, humility and accountability. Establishing clear norms for respectful disagreement was seen as vital for navigating differences without fear of judgment or exclusion.

Although the emphasis was on ways of being rather than prescriptive methods, community members also pointed to concrete strategies that help make these values tangible in practice. Trust-building activities were considered necessary for humanizing participants and creating a foundation for engaging with tension. Structured opportunities for participation and clear instructions for difficult discussions can broaden involvement, especially when multiple avenues for engagement are offered. Respondents also stressed the importance of integrating diverse perspectives into curriculum and pedagogy to ensure all students feel reflected in what they learn. Finally, setting expectations early – and reiterating them throughout a course or program – was viewed as a key tool for facilitators when conflict arises.

When reflecting on safety and security, the subcommittee noted that institutional responses to moments of tension – such as communications, increased or redistributed safety personnel and targeted resources – often shape how community members experience trust and belonging. While many participants reported feeling generally safe on campus, most expressed lower levels of perceived safety and raised concerns about communication deficits, bias and inconsistent institutional practices. Experiences with security staff were mixed, with internal agents described by some as approachable, while outsourced guards and police presence evoked fear related to profiling and escalation. Additional concerns about accountability, underfunded or inaccessible support resources and the physical environment of the university further complicated the picture. These assessments – along with deep divisions around protest and political expression – illustrate the complexity of fostering a campus climate where healthy dialogue and genuine safety can coexist.

ANTI-ARAB RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia subcommittee underscored the need for Concordia to uphold genuine institutional neutrality – especially in politically sensitive contexts. They stressed that the university's relationships with external organizations must not compromise the safety, trust or equitable treatment of its diverse communities. The subcommittee expressed deep concern that certain university external associations have contributed to perceptions of bias, harmed vulnerable students and undermined confidence in Concordia's ability to fairly assess complaints or protect those targeted by racism, Islamophobia or anti-Palestinian racism. Rebuilding trust, they emphasized, will require clearer boundaries between the university and external organizations, as well as transparent, accountable practices across all units responsible for disciplinary matters or student safety.

The subcommittee began its work with two approaches to data collection: open-call listening sessions and online surveys. They adjusted their approach as the research progressed, to maximize chances for participation. Students were more responsive to targeted outreach than to open calls, particularly through social media and word of mouth. As a result, invitations were directed through these channels, including the creation of an Instagram page and collaboration with student associations and trusted contacts. Although these efforts improved promotion, participation remained low due to a broader loss of trust in the university among Arab, Muslim and politically active students. Palestinian community members were experiencing profound mental and emotional distress, including grief over lost family members, loved ones trapped under rubble and the destruction of homes and schools. Even those without personal ties to Palestine were deeply affected by witnessing the suffering of friends and colleagues, with many feeling that the university was indifferent to their pain or viewed them as threats to be policed rather than members of the community needing support.

The subcommittee also reported that pervasive alienation and lack of trust emerged as a recurring theme in nearly every listening session. Faculty and staff frequently cited fear of professional reprisal, while many students expressed deep skepticism toward the intentions of university as well as the subcommittee. In some cases, students declined participation despite serious allegations – such as professors doxing their own students – because they felt too intimidated to come forward. It took great courage for student, staff and faculty to come forward under these conditions.

A major theme running through their recommendations is an urgent need to restore credibility to the university's internal systems of fairness and accountability. Consultation participants described deep mistrust in offices responsible for complaints, adjudication and oversight, expressing that these units are experienced as extensions of the very inequities they are meant to address. The subcommittee therefore called for independent monitoring and auditing to ensure that disciplinary procedures, security practices and oversight mechanisms operate without bias, apply policies consistently and do not reproduce patterns of profiling, surveillance, or systemic discrimination. They stressed that without such reforms, under-reporting will persist, reinforcing harmful misconceptions about the prevalence and seriousness of racism on campus.

The subcommittee also called for a fundamental rethinking of how the university understands and operationalizes “safety.” They argued that current approaches often conflate discomfort with danger, elevate securitization over dialogue and disproportionately expose racialized students to profiling and punitive responses. They advocated instead for a model of safety grounded in academic freedom, respectful debate, equitable treatment and protection from harassment rather than the suppression of dissenting views. Such a shift, they noted, is both urgently needed now and deeply structural, requiring cultural, pedagogical and procedural change.

Finally, the subcommittee emphasized the importance of creating academic and community spaces that reflect and support the identities, histories and intellectual interests of Concordia's Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA), Arab and Muslim students. They noted that despite large enrollments and strong interest, there is no formal academic pathway or dedicated community home for these students, leading to feelings of exclusion and missed opportunities for meaningful, transformative scholarship. They therefore recommended developing a formal SWANA or Arab Studies program, along with a physical gathering space to foster belonging, intellectual exploration and community-building.

It is also important to note that the Anti-Arab Racism & Islamophobia subcommittee, in addition to the above, put forward recommendations to enhance institutional autonomy and accountability and safeguard rigorous discourse. These are further expanded on in the Global Recommendations section.

ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

The Anti-Asian Racism subcommittee collected data using three methods: an arts-based focus group, a survey and online comment submissions. The focus group took place during a three-hour “Dumplings and Dialogue” workshop and centered around campus experiences of Asian-identifying Concordians. These insights then informed the development of the survey. Over a month and a half, the survey reached a broader and larger group of individuals than the workshop and gathered data in four main areas: perceptions of self, availability and access to culturally meaningful and racially relevant opportunities, identification of concerns and culturally relevant ideas for improvements and initiatives. The online comment submission forms allowed for open-ended input, aligning with the practices of the other STRIVE subcommittees.

The subcommittee called for greater visibility and recognition of Asian cultures and experiences at Concordia. They highlighted the need for celebrations of Asian holidays, conferences spotlighting Asian scholarship and local issues, more dedicated support for Asian student groups and opportunities for intergenerational exchange within the Asian community. Concerns were raised about the lack of dedicated spaces and resources, prompting a call for an Asian student centre, gathering spaces, a centralized website and stronger representation of Asian alumni, faculty, staff and students. The subcommittee also emphasized the importance of expanding research and educational initiatives focused on anti-Asian racism to foster awareness, cultural safety and meaningful inclusion throughout the university.

In addition to these recommendations, the subcommittee encouraged further exploration of interconnected issues shaping the well-being and safety of Asian community members – such as the differing experiences and challenges of newcomers versus second and third-generation Asians in Montreal and Canada). They stressed the importance of understanding the experiences of individuals with non-conforming, nonbinary and gender-fluid identities, especially regarding microaggressions, safety and navigating campus spaces with caution. They also underscored persistent challenges in engagement at Concordia, noting limited awareness of the STRIVE initiative, low participation

across departments, lack of clarity concerning boundaries of Asian identity, and barriers to disseminating information about events. The subcommittee called for a deeper examination of what safety means for Asian students, faculty and staff, as well as efforts to address racist microaggressions – such as erasure, tokenism and the model minority stereotype – and how such dynamics impact reporting and trust in university services. Community reflections further emphasized the need to raise awareness of microaggressions and create opportunities for collective support. Many participants expressed that an Asian-focused space could foster solidarity, provide a comfortable environment for discussing racism, and offer a more organic pathway to acknowledgment and validation than formal services currently do.

The subcommittee also recommended integrating anti-Asian racism awareness and prevention training – especially content on microaggressions – into mandatory workshops. They emphasized that culturally grounded programming, such as workshops celebrating Asian cuisines and traditions, is essential for community well-being, and not merely recreational. The subcommittee additionally pointed to the importance of gathering more nuanced demographic data to capture the diversity within Asian experiences, noting gaps such as the absence of participants from West or Middle Eastern Asia and the need for more targeted approaches across different subgroups. Finally, the subcommittee stressed the importance of reducing tokenism by ensuring accountability and follow-through on community-informed recommendations, improving transparency around decision-making, maintaining ongoing evaluation with those most impacted, and guaranteeing fair compensation for the labour involved in equity-related initiatives.

ANTISEMITISM

The Antisemitism subcommittee heard from community members that Jews have faced a range of problematic and exclusionary behaviours that violate the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. These experiences include direct attacks – such as harassment, verbal violence, discrimination, intimidation and physical violence as well as indirect attacks like graffiti and property damage targeting the community as a whole. Incidents of anti-Jewish racism erode the sense of safety not only for those experiencing them, but also for witnesses, and members of the Jewish community who experience the possibility or threat of being targeted. Further, the subcommittee heard from participants that all these behaviours have become so normalized and entrenched that some individuals conceal or consider concealing their Jewish identity.

The subcommittee's primary data collection involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews, using a trauma-informed approach, in the form of small group listening sessions, which they found to be a highly fruitful method of gathering qualitative data from community members. Participants were diverse in terms of university role and political views, representing a spectrum of political positions on the Middle East conflict. Most participants identified as Jewish. Participants were asked to provide informed consent before or at the start of each listening session, or when contributing an online submission. The collected data was reflexively and systematically analysed, looking at the overarching themes that emerged.

The subcommittee also created a survey for Jewish students, staff and faculty at the university – with measures to ensure only current or recent university members could participate. The survey design drew on the data and insights from the listening sessions and online submissions. Jewish members of the community were recruited to participate through direct email and snowball sampling, resulting in more than eighty respondents, who all confirmed they were Jewish. The survey provided complementary quantitative data on Jewish experiences at Concordia, and how these experiences have been impacted by antisemitism. It also evaluated campus climate since the Hamas-led assault on Israel on October 7, 2023. The events of that day represent the deadliest attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust. While many Jewish Concordians grieved the loss of life, others felt that they did not have the space to mourn, or to express nuanced and complex reactions. The community felt a lack of empathy for this moment of grieving, and many felt pressure to conform to a political position without being given the space to respond emotionally to the loss.

A substantial number of the negative experiences reported to the subcommittee relate to the highly polarized and one-sided campus discourse around the Israel/Palestine conflict. Verbal slurs, it was noted, frequently reference Zionism and Jewish connections with the State of Israel. Aggression and attacks are commonly linked to this particular issue, with individuals often facing ostracism and exclusion for not adopting the “correct” stance. Frequently, experiences of anti-Jewish racism, especially those tied to the polarization around Israel/Palestine, involve ignorance or misinformation.

Many Jewish Concordians reported that these experiences have had a negative impact – not only on their mental health and relationships, but also on their core activities at the university, including work, research, teaching and learning. They described feelings of betrayal and disillusionment, believing Concordia has not done enough to ensure their safety and uphold their rights under the [Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#). They shared their frustration, perceiving a lack of accountability for harmful behaviours and a lack of transparency with respect to how they are being addressed. Perhaps most concerning, many felt gaslit by peers, with their experiences minimized or even erased, resulting in a severely damaged sense of belonging at the university.

The subcommittee's recommendations begin with a call for clear institutional acknowledgment and accountability regarding anti-Jewish racism on campus. University leadership should explicitly state that antisemitism is a serious and specific problem, acknowledge its distinct historical and contemporary forms, and address how tensions surrounding Israel and Palestine have, at times, heightened harm toward Jewish community members. This includes engaging directly with affected students, faculty and staff; requiring units where discrimination has occurred to acknowledge and address harm; and ensuring that political expression does not excuse exclusion or bias. A comprehensive review of the university's actions since October 7, 2023, is also recommended, both to identify failures and successes and to establish clearer procedures and policies for responding to future crises.

The subcommittee also emphasized a need to strengthen governance, policy and safety to restore trust and ensure fairness. The recommendations call for a comprehensive overhaul of the Code of Rights and Responsibilities to clarify unacceptable behaviors, improve complaint processes, enforce policies promptly and increase transparency through public reporting. The university should also revise equity, hiring, protest, social media and communications policies to explicitly include Jewish experiences and guard against exclusion, politicization and bias. Enhanced security measures – including improved policing practices, building access controls, and safety audits of Jewish spaces – are considered essential for ensuring both actual and perceived safety, especially during protests or periods of heightened tension.

Finally, the recommendations highlight the need for sustained support, education and dialogue as the foundation for lasting cultural change. This includes expanding support for Jewish life and wellbeing through dedicated offices, advisors, workshops, access to kosher food and community-building initiatives, as well as safeguarding and expanding scholarship related to Jewish studies and antisemitism. Targeted training for students, faculty, staff and security personnel should address antisemitism alongside other forms of discrimination, while dialogue-based education and pluralism initiatives should encourage critical thinking, respectful disagreement and intellectual openness. Improving governance and inclusion within student organizations and media outlets is also highlighted as necessary to ensure that campus spaces reflect shared values of fairness, pluralism and mutual respect.

TRANSPHOBIA

The Transphobia subcommittee relied on several methods for data collection: community outreach, qualitative surveys and social action research. They began by connecting with the leadership team at Student Services, the Centre for Gender Advocacy and Queer Concordia, a student-levy fee group – while subcommittee co-leads held several informal conversations with Concordia stakeholders. Two qualitative surveys were developed and disseminated to better understand the experiences of transgender and gender diverse students, staff and faculty at the university.

The subcommittee emphasized that Concordia must fundamentally shift from ad-hoc, student-driven support to a proactive, institution-wide commitment to trans and gender-diverse (TGD) inclusion and identity-specific support. They stressed that the university's current reliance on student and community groups, isolated initiatives and overstretched staff leave TGD students, faculty and staff navigating an unpredictable institutional environment, where community, resources and safety vary drastically from one program, building, or campus to another. To address this, the subcommittee recommends embedding expertise within university structures by hiring, elevating and empowering TGD professionals and allies who can model inclusive pedagogical practices, transform microclimates and drive cultural change across classrooms, labs, studios and mentorship spaces.

The subcommittee's top recommendation is the urgent need for gender-affirming hormone therapy services on campus. The absence of such healthcare access is seen as a form of structural violence that creates a health crisis for a significant portion of Concordia's transgender community. Additional priorities include establishing dedicated, visible and well-resourced institutional infrastructure that affirms TGD people's rights to equitable education and safe participation in university life. The subcommittee called for staffed safer spaces on both campuses, emphasizing that TGD experiences are often obscured within broader 2SLGBTQIA+ frameworks unless explicit attention is given to them. Genuine community and belonging, they stressed, should not depend on chance encounters or student-run groups that dissolve with graduation; instead, Concordia must build lasting, professionally supported environments that foster inclusion, ensure access and provide continuity.



Another major concern is the significant harm caused by surveillance and securitization on campus, particularly in gendered or restricted spaces like washrooms, gyms and changing facilities. The subcommittee underscored how the design and camera placement inside gender-neutral washrooms can create a sense of scrutiny and exclusion that erodes mental health, limits access to campus life, and signals to TGD students that their presence is policed rather than welcomed. The subcommittee stressed that safety must be redefined away from surveillance and toward dignity, accessibility and the removal of barriers that prevent TGD people from fully participating in academic and social spaces.

Equally pressing are the structural information gaps that force TGD community members to navigate Concordia's systems with minimal guidance and significant effort. The subcommittee noted that inconsistent communication, outdated resources and the absence of a centralized point of accountability leave students and staff guessing about how to access essential services – from healthcare and documentation changes to complaint pathways and community supports. They recommend establishing a clearly identifiable and staff-maintained Trans Wellness Hub that consolidates accurate, up-to-date information and reduces reliance on informal networks for knowledge that should be easily accessible.

The subcommittee stressed that none of this work can succeed without meaningful accountability. They cautioned against symbolic gestures or reports that mask inaction, noting that TGD people consistently encounter cisnormative assumptions, under-resourced services and environments where discriminatory conduct is unaddressed. For the environment at Concordia to shift, TGD inclusion and support must become clear and adequately resourced/staffed aspects of the university's mission. The subcommittee called for transparent implementation plans, regular public updates and clear mechanisms to respond to recurrent transphobic behaviour, as well as recognition and fair compensation for the labour of TGD community members who contribute to institutional transformation. They also highlighted the need for sustained investment in TGD scholarship and leadership, including the creation of specialized academic roles that advance research, experiential learning and community-based knowledge.

Collectively, these recommendations outline a vision for Concordia to move beyond reactive or fragmented approaches and instead build a cohesive, sustained and accountable infrastructure that ensures safety, belonging and equity for its trans and gender-diverse community members.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

The Campus Climate subcommittee met with key university units and members and asked them about policies, procedures and institutional practices and other questions related to campus climate.

A central goal of the subcommittee was to mobilize knowledge about Concordia university's campus climate. To do so, members interviewed key stakeholders about experiences of racism and identity-based violence. During these conversations, interviewees also shared accounts of care experienced by students, faculty and staff. These stories highlighted the relational and practical ways Concordians, across roles and units, show up for one another in moments of crisis and uncertainty. Collectively, these narratives revealed both the harms present on campus and the care that continues to exist alongside them.

To inform its work, the subcommittee engaged with a wide range of student-facing units, administrative and service offices and senior leadership. These conversations provided insight into how campus climate is perceived, supported and regulated across the university – and how policies and practices are experienced by those working closest with students and community members.

A recurring theme across interviews was low institutional trust, accompanied by strong calls for greater transparency and collaboration. Black students continue to report experiences of racism from peers and professors, and many students complete their degrees without ever being taught by a Black professor due to the limited number of full-time Black faculty. Black staff also reported feeling that they are more frequently overlooked for promotion. Meanwhile, health-vulnerable faculty, staff and students –including those continuing COVID-19 precautions – perceived an erosion of institutional care. Concerns included the removal of mask dispensers, the absence of messaging encouraging people to stay home or mask when ill, reduced flexibility for remote participation, and reports of security personnel asking individuals to remove masks to confirm their identity. Participants emphasized that these developments are especially concerning from a disability justice perspective.

Faculty and staff also voiced concern about financial precarity and austerity measures, underscoring a desire for increased transparency and meaningful involvement in budgetary decisions. Many highlighted the depth of expertise and institutional knowledge within the university, suggesting that more participatory approaches could foster greater trust and buy-in when difficult decisions are required. These concerns were particularly pronounced in faculty governance settings.



In addition to these challenges, the subcommittee sought to better understand experiences of relational and institutional care within the Concordia community. Amid what many described as a global polycrisis – felt acutely within universities – interviewees shared moving accounts of colleagues and instructors meaningfully showing up for one another. These acts of care were often relational, intentional and practical, including checking in during moments of difficulty, offering flexibility in coursework or working conditions and providing tangible forms of support.

These narratives underscore that care is already deeply embedded within the Concordia community, even during times of profound strain and uncertainty. Many Concordians continue to support one another in ways that often go unrecognized. Intentionally highlighting and learning from these practices could benefit the university by providing concrete examples of care and informing how such practices can be better supported, sustained and institutionalized. Recognizing care as a shared responsibility and foundational value is especially important as social, political and ecological pressures on academic communities continue to intensify.

The subcommittee also wishes to acknowledge that the individuals interviewed care deeply about the Concordia community and are actively working to improve campus climate, often in ways that remain unseen. Many of the policies identified as needing review or clarification are already in various stages of reassessment due to the efforts of dedicated Concordia employees.

When discussing policies and procedures, a clear divide in perspectives emerged. Administrative offices generally expressed confidence in existing policy frameworks, especially those emphasizing informal resolution. In contrast, staff working in student-facing roles raised concerns about

inconsistent interpretation, limited transparency and uneven application. Common issues included a lack of clarity about how policies are enforced, infrequent or inconsistent review processes, limited opportunities for stakeholder input and tensions between confidentiality requirements and the amount of information shared with complainants.

Significant concerns were raised about procedural capacity and timeliness, particularly in offices responsible for adjudication and rights-related processes. Participants reported that some students graduate before their cases are resolved or disengage entirely due to the emotional and administrative burden involved. Clearer communication and greater use of plain language were identified as essential improvements.

Several policy areas were identified as needing review or clarification due to misalignment with current campus realities. Issues related to the use of space were described as a frequent source of conflict – especially during exam periods – due to unclear booking conditions and monitoring. Policies on posters and signage were described as inconsistently enforced, with ambiguity around enforcement and decision-making authority. Additional concerns included the presence of non-affiliated individuals on campus as well as identification procedures, the safety implications of requiring individuals to remove face coverings and the disproportionate impact of some practices on marginalized and health-vulnerable community members. Governance structures for student life were described as outdated, and communication guidelines were viewed as vague and open to interpretation, with potential for misuse.

There was also a strong call for clearer and more consistent institutional responses to global conflict and geopolitical violence. Although the university has sometimes issued statements or offered support, responses were described as uneven, leaving affected community members without sufficient recognition or resources. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating emotional literacy into institutional responses, recognizing how global and local events – and intersecting forms of oppression like racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia – shape wellbeing, learning and work on campus.



VI. GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force's global recommendations and suggested actions either have applicability across identities and/or represent recommendations that were independently made across numerous subcommittees.

COMMUNICATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

- Develop clear guidelines for framing messaging about global events, upcoming protests and condemnation of behaviour.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Revisit and clearly communicate the criteria for deciding which types of events, incidents and emergencies are shared with the Concordia community.
- Use more specific language when seeking to acknowledge or understand the experiences of certain communities, and when soliciting their engagement avoid generic language that flattens or erases identity. For example, incorporate references to geography, intersections and/or experience.
- Aim for informative and actionable communication when safety-related incidents are taking place on campus and minimize the time between when such incidents are registered by the university and when the university releases messaging about them. This includes improving the AlertUs app.
- Move away from sharing resources in response to geopolitical crisis moments to avoid the impression of bias towards certain groups. Instead, continue to prioritize regular reminders about available resources and appropriate accommodations for people facing a variety of crises in their lives and communities.

SAFETY, SECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

RECOMMENDATION

- Shift, deepen and/or broaden the current discourse around "safety." STRIVE's consultations revealed diverse perceptions of safety on campus and highlighted different paths forward. For some consultation participants, securitization, or insulation from dissenting views, has raised concerns about profiling, surveillance and criminalization of racialized members of the community and those with TGD identities. For others, the current conceptualization of safety fails to resonate due to its formal, non-relational and procedural focus. Other community members indicated that more effort and support should be devoted to current safety practices.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Expand and/or strengthen mandatory cultural-safety and de-escalation training for all safety personnel working on campus, with the goal of decreasing tensions and mitigating concerns about profiling.
- Revisit the need for invasive methods of surveillance, including cameras inside bathroom facilities, which have a role in deterrence in some respects, but also have an outsized impact on some minoritized groups such as TGD community members.
- Develop or expand training opportunities for students, staff and faculty on de-escalation and how to respond in tense situations.
- Increase knowledge sharing around the role of Campus Safety and Prevention Services and other campus services.
- Assess the number, type and location of safe spaces for groups experiencing identity-based violence. Audit the extent to which these spaces are targeted and implement measures to increase safety.
- Establish spaces on campus that address the specific needs of identity-based groups, including gender inclusive washrooms on both campuses, gender-inclusive change rooms within sports and exercise facilities and specific spaces designated for the use of identity-based groups for the purposes of strengthening communities.
- Create an anti-doxing committee to develop clearer guidelines and support mechanisms related to social media harms and doxing.

PROCESSES

RECOMMENDATION

- Explore ways in which the processes of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities, the Ombuds Office and other units can be made more transparent, accountable, proactive and responsive to the diverse needs of the campus community.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Establish a code of conduct addressing protests on university property.
- Establish clear, community-centered guidelines and institutional supports to prevent and respond to online harassment, doxing and defamation, with an emphasis on protection and care for those targeted.
- Clarify available resources for addressing perceived irregularities in disciplinary processes and strengthen the oversight mechanisms of offices with disciplinary mandates.
- Review when, why and how processes are applied to protect the anonymity of complainants, and the circumstances in which anonymity is not applicable.
- Evaluate processes such as hiring, promotion and awards to ensure systemic biases and barriers do not influence outcomes.
- Explore ways to increase the transparency in decision-making regarding referring complaints to the tribunal level.
- Track anonymized identity-based data on a voluntary basis.
- Conduct more frequent reviews of university policies to ensure effectiveness and relevance such as the [Temporary Use of Space policy](#).
- Increase transparency and engage in trust-building around policies, complaint processes and support services.
- Increase the visibility and accessibility of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities and related units.
- Provide support to institutional offices in outreach, feedback collection and improving community perceptions.
- Establish a standing review committee to monitor consistency and fairness in disciplinary procedures across Campus Safety and Prevention Services, the Office of Rights and Responsibilities and the Ombuds Office.
- Explore options for ensuring good governance, inclusion and accountability of independent student groups and associations.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

RECOMMENDATION

- Reconceptualize community building as taking place within and outside the university and develop tailored strategies to foster mutually beneficial relationships and bridge networks.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Increase funding and staff talent pools for mental health, health services and wellness resources, prioritizing holistic and culturally sensitive models of care.
- Invest in activating and mobilizing collective care and responsibility.
- Increase support for and development of identity-based student groups.
- Invest in relationship building and dialoguing with identity-based student groups.
- Invest in relationship building and dialoguing with identity-based groups beyond the university to build bridge networks.
- Celebrate or acknowledge holidays and festivals observed by identifiable communities.
- Prioritize the provision of affirming care through Health Services for individuals impacted by identity-based violence, discrimination or marginalization, including gender-affirming care.
- Pursue opportunities for intergenerational engagement within and across communities.
- Promote community emotional literacy and collective care by leveraging available expertise and providing skill-building opportunities in these areas.
- Increase research projects related to the specific issues of identity-based violence, as well as forms of discrimination and exclusion experienced by identifiable communities.
- Launch a campus-wide appreciative inquiry campaign focusing on collective care.
- Expand community-building initiatives to address trust and repair.

PLURALISM

RECOMMENDATION

- Strengthen the university community's ability to productively engage in dialogue and debate.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Pursue broad representation of identity-based groups in all university bodies.
- Continue and expand on the Courageous Conversation series.
- Establish a Task Force to examine university values and pluralism, with an emphasis on open inquiry and healthy dialogue.
- Identify and highlight learning-oriented examples of healthy dialogue on campus such as events involving faculty and staff participants, intergenerational community exchanges and student-led initiatives.
- Encourage and support healthy dialogue within and between university communities.

RESEARCH, TEACHING AND TRAINING

RECOMMENDATION

- Increase and diversify training and academic programming available to faculty, staff and students.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Increase awareness and accessibility of existing university resources on inclusivity, identity-based violence, cultural safety training and healthy dialogue – such as Centre for Teaching and Learning's Inclusive Pedagogy and Dealing with Challenging Moments in the Classroom, the Office of Student Engagement training on group conflicts and CU Wellness training on interpersonal communication.
- Dedicate resources towards additional workshops, webinars and training modules on specific forms of identity-based violence and its impact on the targeted communities.
- Develop and mandate training for course instructors and event facilitators to identify the values, commitments and vision they bring to their work. Offer sessions on specific topics and perspectives to allow for dedicated discussion and peer-support.
- Develop and mandate ongoing inclusivity and healthy dialogue training for all students.
- Develop and mandate ongoing inclusivity and healthy dialogue training for all administrators, staff and faculty.
- Develop and support academic or community conferences that spotlight initiatives, projects and scholarship from minoritized communities.
- Develop modules on independent and critical thinking, with a view to teaching students how to think, rather than what to think.
- Prioritize research chairs and academic programs in fields related to the communities affected by identity-based violence.
- Develop opportunities, resources and spaces for faculty learning and support around addressing violence and geopolitical diversity in the classroom.



VII. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The STRIVE Task Force's findings underscore the depth and urgency of addressing identity-based violence (IBV) at Concordia and reflects the collective efforts of the Task Force and its six subcommittees. Through their distinct yet interconnected work on Antisemitism, Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia, Anti-Asian Racism, Transphobia and the interstices found at the intersection of identity, the subcommittees have provided critical insights into the diverse experiences and needs of Concordia's communities. Their consultations, listening sessions, surveys and analyses revealed the profound impact of IBV on community members' sense of safety, belonging, mental health and participation in campus life. As a result of the subcommittees' dedicated work, the university now has a clearer understanding of the systemic and far-reaching nature of these harms.

As no set of recommendations is complete without a plan for implementation, STRIVE closes this report by underscoring a final recommendation:

ESTABLISH AN IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE COMMITTEE

Implementing change on this scale requires cross-university collaboration and robust accountability. The best approach to this phase is to establish an implementation committee, composed of representatives from implicated units, as well as faculty, staff and students affected by the issues described in this report, to guide the university in this long-term effort.

The subcommittees' efforts have demonstrated that meaningful institutional change requires careful listening and trust-building, particularly with communities experiencing erasure, marginalization and a lack of support. Each subcommittee encountered unique challenges – from distrust and fear of reprisal to the emotional labour of sharing lived experiences – but their persistence created spaces where community members felt heard, validated and represented. Common needs emerged across all groups, including stronger accountability and reporting mechanisms, improved training and awareness, more inclusive spaces, clearer processes and enhanced support for both bystanders and those directly affected.

The Task Force's work revealed a widespread desire for healthy dialogue, healing and connection. Communities expressed a hope for better opportunities to engage across differences and foster mutual understanding. The work also identified, through the Campus Climate subcommittee, other persisting areas of concern, including the need for Concordia to reaffirm its commitment to health-vulnerable faculty, staff and students by restoring and strengthening visible and practical supports grounded in disability justice principles. This includes reinstating mask dispensers in campus buildings and renewing clear, public health messaging encouraging individuals to stay home and mask when ill, amongst others. There was also strong interest in developing a clearer institutional understanding of the scope of food insecurity and pursuing a coordinated, university-wide response. Collectively, these and other measures referenced in this report would signal institutional care, reduce barriers to accessing school and work and promote a safer, more inclusive campus environment.

The subcommittees' observations underscore that Concordia's diversity is a strength – one that requires intentional support, recognition and structural change to flourish. The university must remain committed to developing equitable, sustainable and community-informed pathways so all its members feel valued, protected and empowered to thrive.

Crucially, the success of these recommendations depends on more than adoption; it requires sustained resourcing, transparency and evaluation over time. Implementation must include clear timelines, publicly communicated benchmarks and mechanisms for regular reporting to the community. Without these, even well-intentioned initiatives risk losing momentum or trust. An implementation and community response committee would play a key role in monitoring progress, identifying gaps and ensuring commitments translate into concrete, measurable change across the institution.

Finally, this report should be seen not as an endpoint, but as a foundation for continued work. Identity-based violence is constantly evolving, and institutional responses must adapt in turn. The Task Force's insights highlight the need for ongoing engagement with evolving community needs, emerging forms of harm and shifting social and political contexts. By embedding reflexivity, community consultation and accountability into its long-term approach, Concordia can move beyond reactive responses toward a proactive culture of care, prevention and shared responsibility.

VIII. APPENDIX

STRIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

CO-CHAIRS

- **Lisa White**, Executive Director, Equity Office
- **Rachel Berger**, Vice-Provost, Innovation in Teaching and Learning, and Associate Professor, History
- **Rilla Khaled**, Associate Professor, Design and Computation Arts and Co-Director of Technoculture, Arts and Games (TAG) Research Center

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The mandates of the steering committee members were fulfilled following their review of the final report in February 2026, unless otherwise noted.

- **Aryan Awasthi**, Graduate Representative, Graduate Student's Association (completed mandate on April 30, 2025)
- **Cael Marcas Keegan**, Transphobia Subcommittee Co-Lead, Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality; Film and Moving Image Studies; Graduate Program Director, Film
- **Cathryn Somrani**, Staff Representative, Change Management Specialist, Digital Transformation Office
- **Charles Draimin**, CUFA Representative, Professor, Accountancy
- **Elana Bloom**, Campus Engagement Subcommittee Co-Lead, Director, Campus Wellness and Support Services
- **Felice Yuen**, Anti-Asian Racism Subcommittee Lead, Assistant Professor, Applied Human Sciences

- **Jacqueline Peters**, Part-time Professor (Linguistics), Classics, Modern Languages and Linguistics
- **Jeff Bicher**, Alumnus Representative, Chief Executive Officer, Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA | Ben Weider JCC | Harry Bronfman YCC
- **Jessica Bleuer**, Campus Climate Subcommittee Lead MA Drama Therapy Lecturer, Supervisor and Researcher, Creative Arts Therapies
- **Kareem Rahaman**, Undergraduate Representative, Finance Coordinator CSU (completed mandate on April 30, 2025)
- **Kim Manning**, Transphobia Subcommittee Co-Lead, Principal, Simone de Beauvoir Institute; Professor, Political Science and Women's Studies
- Antisemitism Subcommittee Lead
- **Rana Alrabi**, Alumnus Representative, Journalist
- **Rosemary Reilly**, Campus Engagement Subcommittee Co-Lead, Professor, Applied Human Sciences (completed mandate on October 8, 2024)
- **Sarah Ghabrial**, Anti-Arab Racism and Islamophobia Subcommittee Lead, Assistant Professor, History
- **Susan Edey**, Campus Engagement Subcommittee Co-Lead, Senior Director, Community Engagement and Social Impact / SHIFT Team

SUBCOMMITTEES

The mandates of the subcommittee members were fulfilled upon submission of their individual reports to the co-chairs in October 2025, unless otherwise noted.

IDENTITY-BASED SUBCOMMITTEES

ANTI-ARAB RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

- Lead: **Sarah Ghabrial**, Associate Professor, Department of History
- Faculty representative: **Norma Rantisi**, Professor, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment
- Staff representative: **Rania Attir**, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
- Student representative: **Varda Nisar**, Department of Art History

ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

- Lead: **Felice Yuen**, Professor, Department of Applied Human Sciences and Director of the Individualized Program (INDI)
- Faculty representative: **Gillian Sze**, Assistant Professor, Department of English
- Staff representative: **Shin Ling Low**, SHIFT
- Student representatives: **Jon Marvin Reyes**, School of Community and Public Affairs, and **Manan Rajendra Patel**, Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering

ANTISEMITISM

- Lead
- Faculty representative
- Staff representative
- Student representative

TRANSPHOBIA

- Co-leads: **Cael Marcas Keegan**, Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality; Film and Moving Image Studies; Graduate Program Director, Film, and **Kim Manning**, Principal, Simone de Beauvoir Institute; Professor, Political Science and Women's Studies
- Student representatives: **Alex Francavilla**, Department of Psychology, **Belen Blizzard**, 2SLGBTQIA+ student support coordinator, and **Kat Matheson**, Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering (completed mandate on January 30, 2025)

UNIVERSITY-WIDE SUBCOMMITTEES

CAMPUS CLIMATE

- Lead: **Jessica Bleuer**, MA Drama Therapy Lecturer, Supervisor and Researcher
- Faculty representative
- Staff representative: **Eddie Jude Hareven**, Dean of Students Office
- Student representatives: **Ana Bedoya**, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, and **Mani Asadieraghi**, Department of Biology

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

- Co-leads: **Elana Bloom**, Director, Campus Wellness and Support Services, and **Susan Edey**, Senior Director, Community Engagement and Social Impact
- Faculty representative: **Alessandra Renzi**, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies
- Staff representatives: **Jen Bourque**, Multi-faith and Spirituality Centre, and **Joel Dinku**, Dean of Students Office
- Student representative: **Ana Bedoya**, Simone de Beauvoir Institute

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- **Aedan Conlin**, Antisemitism subcommittee, student
- **Atefeh Heydari**, Campus Engagement subcommittee, student
- **Christopher Plenzich**, Project Lead, Equity Office
- **Fatemeh Nagahvi Olya**, Administrative Assistant, student
- **Johanne Cadorette**, Communications manager, University Communications Services
- **Lindsey Reshef**, Transphobia Subcommittee, student and 2022 recipient of the Concordia Undergraduate Student Research Award (CUSRA) for the research project "Performing Across the Spectrum: Understanding the Experiences of Concordia's Transgender Theatre Students."
- **Pamela Adedje**, Department Assistant, Equity Office
- **Priscilla Joly**, General Researcher, student

