



UNIVERSITÉ  
Concordia  
UNIVERSITY

# BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT

PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT  
2026



MESSAGE  
FROM THE  
**PRESIDENT**

# BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT

Welcome to the annual *President's Report* for Concordia University! Here, you'll find a collection of remarkable stories of students, faculty, alumni and friends helping to transform their communities in Montreal and around the world.

When you see their achievements together in one place, it certainly feels like the past year will be remembered as a pivotal time in Concordia's history.

For me, the story of *Starsailor* best captures the drive, ambition and innovation happening on our campuses. After seven years of development and contributions from 700 students, Space Concordia and its partners — especially the Cree community of Mistissini — achieved the first space launch from Canadian soil in a quarter century.

Several key initiatives also wrapped up, including our 50th-anniversary celebrations and our comprehensive fundraising campaign, which shattered all expectations by bringing in over \$365 million for students, research, campus improvements and community engagement.

Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated faculty, Concordia continues to expand its impact as one of Canada's fastest-growing research universities. Our researchers realized noteworthy firsts for our community, including a nomination to the Global Young Academy and a SSHRC Impact Award. Others earned some of Quebec and Canada's top honours in their artistic or academic fields, such as the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas and a Dorothy Killam Fellowship.

As the university's worldwide network of alumni surpassed 270,000, Concordians seemed ubiquitous on the international arts scene. In the past year alone, they brought home Emmys, Grammys and Oscars. Another graduate is representing Canada at the Venice Biennale.

While it's fun to look back, Concordia has always been more focused on the future. That's why the theme of this edition is "Building What's Next."

So, what is next? Faced with major disruptive forces in society, politics, technology, the economy and the environment, no one knows for certain.

What I do know is that Concordians excel in moments like these by becoming more sustainable, reimagining teaching and learning, building high-impact partnerships and forging new paths in research and creativity.

As *Starsailor* reminds us, when we work together, the sky is literally the limit.



**GRAHAM CARR**

PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR



# NEXT- GEN NOW





# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

AS A NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY, WE REIMAGINE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION. CONCORDIA'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND CROSS-FUNCTIONAL RESEARCH BENEFITS OUR 50,000 STUDENTS. LOCATED IN VIBRANT MONTREAL ON THE TRADITIONAL WATERS OF THE KANIEN'KEHÁ:KA NATION, CONCORDIA HAS CONSISTENTLY RANKED AS A TOP YOUNG UNIVERSITY IN NORTH AMERICA. WE STRIVE TO BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD.

## DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION

Pushing the boundaries of knowledge across disciplines

## ENGAGEMENT

Sharing expertise to inform, inspire and connect

## SUSTAINABILITY

Advancing practical solutions for a more resilient future

## HEALTH

Improving well-being through research, collaboration and care

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Reimagining education for a new generation

## STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Unlocking talent through exchange and opportunity

# NEXT-GEN DISCOVERY & INNOVATION

## RESEARCH WITH PURPOSE

### **Childhood affluence and adversity affect kids' chances to become leaders**

Children who grow up in affluent households are significantly more likely to hold formal leadership positions by their mid-twenties than those from families facing adversity, according to a Concordia-led study. The research shows that while both groups can succeed, the paths they take differ sharply.

Affluent children tend to benefit from job opportunities gained through family and personal connections. These advantages accumulate over time, increasing their chances of becoming supervisors or managers. In contrast, children in adverse circumstances often lack access to such networks and face additional barriers, including chronic stress and limited developmental resources.

The study — led by Steve Granger, assistant professor of management at the John Molson School of Business — analyzed data from nearly 6,800 participants in the British Cohort Study, which tracked individuals born in 1970 from birth to age 26. While financial hardship did not directly predict leadership outcomes, early exposure to instability and stress was found to limit long-term opportunities.

The authors suggest that investing in programs that help disadvantaged youth build skills and professional networks could help them reach leadership roles in adulthood.

## Concordia's student-built rocket takes flight ▼

After years of design, testing and perseverance, Space Concordia students successfully launched *Starsailor*, a 13-metre liquid-fuel rocket built by the student group from the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science. The rocket lifted off from a remote site in northern Quebec, about 250 kilometres north of the Cree community of Mistissini.

Powered by a custom-built engine capable of exceeding five times the speed of sound, *Starsailor* carried cameras, an onboard flight computer and commemorative items. Although the rocket separated earlier than planned, the mission became the first Canadian launch in the 21st century and the first-ever space launch in Quebec.

More than 700 Concordia students have contributed to the project since its inception in 2018, which received major support from donors, including Concordia Chancellor Gina Cody, Lorne Trottier and the Trottier Family Foundation. The project is led by the Rocketry Division of Space Concordia and has grown into one of the most advanced student rocketry initiatives in the world.



SPACE CONCORDIA



GABRIEL DUPRAS



### **Music makes us move even when we don't like it ▲**

The pleasurable urge to “groove” to music is a psychological response separate from musical enjoyment, according to new Concordia research. The study, led by Isaac Romkey, a PhD student in the Department of Psychology, shows that even people with musical anhedonia — those who don't typically enjoy music — still feel compelled to move. The research shows that movement itself can generate enjoyment, and that pleasure and motion are processed through partly distinct brain systems.

### **Abundant Intelligences research program is indigenizing AI**

A Concordia-led initiative is working to indigenize artificial intelligence by embedding Indigenous knowledge systems, values and worldviews into AI design and governance. The international, multi-institutional and interdisciplinary Abundant Intelligences program seeks to reshape how AI is developed, used and taught in Canada and beyond.

Researchers involved believe this alternative approach can create an AI that is oriented towards human thriving, preserves Indigenous languages, addresses pressing environmental and sustainability issues, reimagines public-health solutions and more.

### **Social media's fake news is the target of a new tool developed at Concordia**

Researchers at the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science have developed a digital tool aimed at combatting fake news on social media. Through probabilistic models and deep learning, SmoothDetector helps users identify misleading or unreliable content by analyzing how information spreads online and by flagging patterns associated with disinformation. Designed to support media literacy rather than censor content, the project aims to empower users to better understand and resist the dynamics of online misinformation.



### **Can AI transform art education and pedagogy? ▲**

A research team led by jessie beier, assistant professor in Concordia's Department of Art Education, is exploring how AI can reshape art education by rethinking creativity, learning and pedagogy. Their research-creation initiative, titled Learning Machines, uses collaborative, experimental approaches — including a live-streamed TV show — to examine how algorithms influence teaching and perception. The work emphasizes accessibility, collective learning and critical engagement with AI, asking broader questions about intelligence, education and what it means to learn in an age of machine-driven technologies.

### **Policy reform could be key to easing Canada's housing and affordability crisis**

Research led by Erkan Yönder, associate professor at the John Molson School of Business, in partnership with Canadian private-equity firm Equiton, finds that policy reform — especially reducing red tape and speeding up approvals — could significantly boost housing supply and improve affordability in Canada.

Using AI to analyze market data, the study shows that streamlining regulations could raise housing completions by up to 10 per cent. Rising construction costs and labour shortages, however, remain major barriers. The authors say that solutions must be tailored by city and supported through collaboration across governments, industry and communities.

### **Concordia partners with National Bank of Canada to advance trustworthy AI systems ▼**

A \$1.5-million research initiative led by Emad Shihab, associate dean of Research and Innovation, and professor at the Gina Cody School, will help develop more trustworthy AI systems.

The project, a partnership between Concordia and National Bank of Canada, focuses on improving how AI is used in software development — automating tasks like coding and testing, while ensuring reliability, security and transparency. It will also create tools to verify AI-generated code and train graduate students through hands-on industry experience, helping bridge academic research and real-world financial-sector needs. The initiative is co-funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.



# NEXT-GEN ENGAGEMENT

CONNECTING CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY



## ◀ Inaugural Honouring Black Presence at Concordia public art installation opens

Alumnus Charles Campbell is the first-ever selected artist to create an installation for the Honouring Black Presence at Concordia public art program. His proposal was among 21 submissions received in response to the first Canada-wide call for Black artists with a connection to Concordia or Montreal's Black communities.

Campbell's multimedia installation, *Those that pass through, remain, return*, transforms the Henry F. Hall Building entrance on Bishop Street through vibrant visual and sonic elements, rooted in recorded "breath portraits" of Black community members.

Developed in collaboration with students, faculty and the NouLa Black Student Centre, the project emphasizes memory, ancestry and lived experience, using breath as a powerful symbol of presence and connection.

Part of a broader public art initiative stemming from Concordia's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism, the installation aims to counter erasure, spark dialogue and create a more welcoming space on campus. It will remain on display for three years as the first in a rotating series that highlights Black artists.



Wes Crayne

## Community-based internships support transformative learning on the ground

The university's SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation and the Office of Community Engagement have merged their internship initiatives into a unified community-based program, expanding access for undergraduates across all faculties.

The paid placements connect students with local organizations — including Black- and Indigenous-led groups — offering hands-on experience while addressing community needs. Building on more than 350 past internships, the program strengthens skills, networks and real-world projects, helping students from every faculty to make a difference in their communities prior to graduating.

## School of Cinema expands pathways into Quebec's film industry and beyond

Concordia's cinema school has significantly expanded its programs, partnerships and industry connections over the past five years to better prepare students for Quebec's growing film sector.

New microprograms, courses and a restructured MFA reflect evolving industry needs, while collaborations — including internships with production company Zone3 — offer hands-on experience and mentorship. Initiatives such as the new Concordia-SODEC Emerging Filmmaker Competition further strengthen pathways from school to industry, providing real-world training and stronger ties between academia and the world of film.



## Concordians are re-storying city sites through the lens of waste ▲

Researchers and students are reimagining Montreal through WasteScapes, an interactive app that reveals hidden stories of urban waste systems. Led by Department of Communication Studies professor Elizabeth Miller, the project invites users to explore more than 60 sites such as former landfills, industrial corridors and infrastructure networks through audio, art and augmented experiences. WasteScapes encourages people to rethink what counts as waste and how it shapes cities, while promoting sustainability, education and public engagement.

## Concordia charts a vision for the future of its campuses

Concordia's Campus Master Plan outlines a long-term vision for developing its Sir George Williams and Loyola campuses over the next years. Shaped by extensive community consultation, the plan provides a flexible framework to guide future growth. It also prioritizes sustainability, heritage preservation, innovation and reconciliation, while improving mobility, green spaces and learning environments.

The plan aims to balance expansion with financial realities and evolving academic needs, ensuring campuses remain inclusive, adaptable and aligned with the university's long-term goals.



### **Concordia students support community podcast by Kahnawà:ke youth**

Department of Journalism students mentored eighth-graders at Kahnawà:ke Survival School to create a community podcast, *Voices of Kahnawà:ke*. Through this partnership, youth developed storytelling and media skills while sharing their perspectives on topics such as myths, social justice and culture.

Guided by associate professor Kristy Snell and Concordia's Institute for Inclusive, Investigative and Innovative Journalism, the project fostered mutual learning, amplified Indigenous voices and encouraged students to consider future studies and careers in journalism. The stories featured on the podcast were also packaged for radio listeners and aired in December on CBC Radio's *All in a Weekend*.

### **◀ 'Building a community around a garden'**

Mitchell McLarnon, assistant professor in the Department of Education, has created an urban garden at the Grey Nuns as a hands-on teaching and research space that connects students, educators and community groups.

Located on the university's downtown campus, the project uses gardening to explore climate change, sustainability and food systems through experiential learning. By engaging young people in planting, seed-saving and environmental discussions, it fosters well-being and deeper ecological awareness. McLarnon aims to make green spaces more accessible and inclusive, ultimately "building a community around a garden" rather than just a community garden.

### **John Molson School of Business celebrates 25 years**

The John Molson School of Business marked 25 years since its 2000 renaming, made possible thanks to a major gift from the Molson family and Molson Foundation. Since then, the school has grown into one of Canada's largest and top-ranked business schools, recently earning *Bloomberg Businessweek's* top national ranking.

The milestone also highlights achievements such as the prestigious "double crown" accreditation, strong industry ties and experiential learning, while celebrating a legacy of community support and looking ahead to continued global impact and innovation.

## Concordians host Montreal's first Great Northern Concrete Toboggan Race since 2006 ▼

A team of Concordia alumni brought the Great Northern Concrete Toboggan Race back to Montreal for the first time since 2006, hosting more than 400 engineering students from across

Canada. The competition challenges teams to design and race concrete-sled toboggans judged on performance, safety and creativity. Alongside the alumni organizers, Concordia students competed with their own design, showcasing hands-on learning, teamwork and school spirit in one of the country's longest-running engineering events.





# NEXT-GEN SUSTAINABILITY

LEADING WITH RESPONSIBILITY



## **A sustainable, solar-powered 15-minute city ◀**

A team led by Caroline Hachem-Vermette, associate professor in the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering, has developed a model for a sustainable, solar-powered “15-minute city” — where essentials like groceries and services are within about one kilometre of home.

Integrating energy, mobility, food systems and land use, it combines renewable power, electric transportation and urban agriculture to reduce car dependence. Tested in Ontario, the model showed potential to cut emissions by up to 98 per cent while lowering costs and strengthening community connections.

## Concordia completes transition to 100 per cent sustainable investments

The Concordia University Inter-Generational Fund (CUiF) has completed its transition to a “100/0/10” framework, committing all investments to sustainable strategies while directing 10 per cent towards mission-driven initiatives.

The shift, launched in 2019, moves beyond net-zero goals towards a restorative economic model focused on people, planet and a sustainable economy. The fund’s strategy is rooted in allocating capital with purpose and intentionality — a commitment to integrating responsible investment factors that align with Concordia’s sustainability objectives.

The milestone positions Concordia as a leader in responsible investing and demonstrates how institutional funds can align financial performance with long-term environmental and social impact.



## Nanomaterials emerge as powerful tool for coastal oil spill cleanup ▲

A Concordia-led study published in *Environmental Science: Nano* suggests that nanomaterials could transform coastal oil spill cleanup, making it faster, more effective and less harmful to ecosystems.

The review — led by Huifang Bi, a PhD candidate in the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering — analyzed up to 50 studies and found that these materials can enhance methods such as dispersants, sorbents and bioremediation, improving oil removal and breakdown.

Bio-based nanomaterials also show promise as less toxic alternatives to conventional chemicals. However, most research remains at the lab stage, underscoring the need for large-scale field testing and sustainable design for real-world use.





MARIA ESCALONA

### **FOFA Gallery advances sustainable art curation ▲**

The university's FOFA Gallery is spearheading sustainable exhibition practices through its Modular Plinth project, rethinking traditional display structures to reduce waste, storage and maintenance.

Developed with designer and alum Arrien Weeks, the modular plinths can be disassembled, reused and made from eco-friendly materials, lowering resource use and costs. Part of a broader sustainability initiative, the project also shares open-source designs to inspire other galleries, promoting adaptable, efficient and environmentally responsible approaches to art curation.

### **Concordia partners with industry leaders to help achieve carbon neutrality**

Concordia is advancing its PLAN/NET ZERØ initiative through key partnerships with industry leaders. A collaboration with Énergir and Hydro-Québec will transform the Loyola Campus into a living lab for low-carbon energy systems, exploring geothermal, solar and energy-storage solutions.

Additionally, a partnership with Johnson Controls will retrofit the downtown Guy-De Maisonneuve Building, cutting energy use by up to 50 per cent while testing smart, sustainable building technologies.





### Study links urban heat in Montreal to unequal greenspace access ▲

A Concordia study led by Lingshan Li, PhD candidate in the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, finds that urban heat in Montreal is closely tied to unequal access to green space, with lower-income and more racially diverse neighbourhoods experiencing higher temperatures due to less vegetation.

Using satellite and census data, researchers from the Next-Generation Cities Institute and the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre show that increasing tree cover significantly reduces heat, especially when tree patches are dense and continuous. The study also highlights a mismatch between areas that most need cooling — including vulnerable populations — and those that benefit from it, offering insights to guide more equitable urban planning.

### Climate Business Institute launches at John Molson School of Business

Concordia's new Climate Business Institute brings together researchers, industry leaders and policymakers to help drive meaningful change around climate action. Focused on the intersection of sustainability and business strategy, it delivers practical research, training and collaborations that support decarbonization and resilient growth.

By bridging academia and industry, the institute aims to turn climate goals into actionable solutions while equipping businesses and future leaders to drive meaningful environmental and economic impact.

### Chronic risks from single-use plastic water bottles need more research ▼

In a recent paper published in the *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, Gina Cody School PhD candidate Sarah Sajedi examines how the health risks of single-use plastic water bottles are significant, yet dangerously understudied.

Reviewing more than 140 studies, she and her collaborators found that bottled-water drinkers ingest tens of thousands of additional micro- and nanoplastics annually. Those particles may enter the bloodstream and organs, potentially causing chronic effects — though the long-term impacts are still unclear.





# NEXT-GEN

# HEALTH

REDEFINING THE FUTURE OF CARE

## **Aquatic therapy can help heal chronic low back pain ►**

Participants in a Concordia study who did water-based exercises saw gains in spinal muscle strength and size, and reported reduced pain-related fear, anxiety and sleep disturbances compared to standard care.

The research suggests aquatic therapy can improve both physical and mental health for people with chronic low back pain. "Getting into water makes people feel better right away, because it takes away loading on the spine," says Maryse Fortin, associate professor in the Department of Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology.



## **Chronic benzodiazepine consumption impacts sleep quality in older adults**

New research reveals that long-term use of benzodiazepines can worsen sleep quality in adults between 55 and 80 rather than improve it. Researchers found these commonly prescribed drugs reduce deep sleep and disrupt brain rhythms essential for memory and cognition. Higher doses were linked to longer time to fall asleep and reach restorative sleep stages. The findings raise concerns about safety and effectiveness, highlighting the need for gradual withdrawal and alternative treatments like cognitive behavioural therapy.





### **\$1.3M to improve care for children affected by obesity ▲**

Angela Alberga, associate professor in Concordia's Department of Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology, has received \$1.3 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to improve care for children and families affected by obesity.

Her research focuses on youth-centred, family-informed approaches that reduce stigma and address unintended harms, aiming to build more equitable and effective health-care systems for children and teens.

### **Concordia researchers are first to clinically scrutinize Dyslexia Adult Checklist**

Researchers conducted the first clinical validation of the widely used Dyslexia Adult Checklist, confirming it is a reliable and accurate screening tool for identifying dyslexia in adults. Based on a 400-person study, the researchers also recommended lowering the cutoff score to better detect cases. The findings improve access to early screening and support.

### **Key marker links coronary artery disease to cognitive decline**

Researchers in the Department of Physics have identified a key biological marker linking coronary artery disease to cognitive decline by analyzing changes in the brain's white matter. They found that the changes were mainly linked to reduced myelin content — the coating that insulates nerve fibers and allows signals to travel through the brain. Myelin loss is often an early sign of cognitive aging.




### **Drones could cut travel delays and reduce spoilage of donated blood ▼**

A logistics model led by PhD candidate Amirhossein Abbaszadeh (pictured) and Hossein Hashemi Doulabi, associate professor in the Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering, shows that drones could significantly improve the transport of donated blood in cities.

By integrating drones with mobile blood-collection vehicles, the system bypasses traffic delays and delivers blood more quickly for processing. Tested using a Quebec City case study, the model improved delivery times, increased efficiency and maintained fresher blood.





# NEXT-GEN TEACHING AND LEARNING

**KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT LIMITS**

**A Quebec first:  
School of Performance  
opens at Concordia ▼**

Concordia has created Quebec's first School of Performance, bringing together its Departments of Contemporary Dance, Music and Theatre into a single interdisciplinary hub opening in September 2026.

"The school's approach serves the various realities of today's arts scene," says Shauna Janssen, associate dean of Academic Programs

and Pedagogy. "Students will move beyond a single discipline, drawing inspiration from other fields to create engaged, inspired and impactful work."

The school will offer expanded opportunities for experimental creation, hybrid performance work and connections with Montreal's cultural sector, including festivals and arts organizations. It will also help prepare students for diverse careers in the arts, cultural leadership and creative industries, while redefining what performance education can be in Quebec.



## **STEP Forward helps boosts confidence for student employees ▶**

Concordia's STEP Forward Student Staff Leadership Program is helping student employees build confidence, reflect on their skills and connect their on-campus jobs to future goals. Supported by the McCall MacBain Foundation, the program offers workshops, mentorship, peer learning and leadership training. A pilot cohort reported increased confidence and stronger engagement in their roles, with supervisors also noting growth in critical thinking and initiative.



## **John Molson School tops Canada in Bloomberg Businessweek ranking**

The John Molson School of Business has been ranked the number-one business school in Canada for its MBA program in *Bloomberg Businessweek's* 2025–26 rankings. It is recognized for strong outcomes in compensation, learning, networking and entrepreneurship, and is based on feedback from students, alumni and employers.

“These rankings affirm our reputation for being an exceptional international business school,” says Anne-Marie Croteau, dean of the John Molson School. “Our MBA graduates are highly sought-after by employers and continue onto rewarding careers.”

## **Regional career fair connects international engineering students to Quebec job market**

The annual Foire des régions conference hosted by Concordia helped connect engineering students and recent alumni with employers from across Quebec. Attendees explored career opportunities beyond Montreal and spoke with organizations from across the province, networked with recruiters and gained insights into engineering roles in diverse sectors, helping students to better understand and access regional employment pathways.

## **PhD-level internship program helps students gain experience beyond academia**

Concordia's Doctoral Student Internship Program (DSIP) gives PhD students paid, hands-on experience beyond academia through part-time roles in university administrative offices. Launched in 2024, the program runs three times a year and allows students like Atefeh Heydari, PhD student in the Social and Cultural Analysis program, to apply their research skills to real projects, policy work and community initiatives. “It's rewarding to see my research skills applied in a practical setting with immediate impact,” Heydari says.

## **Concordia unveils comprehensive French terminology database**

LexiConcordia — a comprehensive professional French terminology tool with more than 4,500 specialized terms — enables students, researchers and professionals to find reliable, contextualized translations in a wide range of fields.

The ambitious database, coordinated by *Réussir en français* with support from the Government of Quebec, aims to strengthen the use of accurate French terminology in professional settings, while helping users navigate complex disciplinary vocabulary and better integrate French into academic and workplace environments.

# NEXT-GEN

# STUDENTS &

WHERE TALENT THRIVES

# FACULTY

## STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

► Concordia students competing at the Milan Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games delivered strong performances across figure skating, women's hockey and freestyle skiing, showcasing the university's continued presence on the international stage.

Several athletes — including **Zachary Lagha** (pictured), **Emma Nonnenmacher**, **Alice Philbert** and **Marion Thénault** — advanced deep into competition, gaining valuable Olympic experience against the world's top competitors. Representing both Canada and France, the student athletes displayed a successful balance of elite sport and academic pursuit on the global stage.

Four graduate students were named winners of the 2025 Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT®) and Ma thèse en 180 secondes after distilling their complex research into a three-minute presentation for a non-specialist audience. The annual event challenges master's and PhD students to communicate their work using only one slide and no jargon. **Megan Mc Manus**, a doctoral student in the Department of Biology, claimed first place for her presentation, while **Marie-Sophie Roy**, **Nabeel Chaumon** and **Alina Gutierrez Mejia** won second place, third place and People's Choice Award, respectively.



The **Stingers women's hockey team** captured U Sports national silver after a strong 2026 championship run — coming up short in the final against the Université de Montréal Carabins, but solidifying their place among Canada's top programs. Captain **Jessymaude Drapeau** played a key role throughout the season, driving offence and anchoring the team's performance. She was named both RSEQ and U Sports Player of the Year, and head coach Julie Chu was named RSEQ Coach of the Year — the sixth time she has received the honour.

The **Concordia Society for Civil Engineering** (CSCE) was recognized with a national Engagement Vitality Award from the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering for its remarkable growth and renewed student engagement. After nearly dissolving due to low participation, the group rebuilt itself to approximately 180 active members in just two years — through technical training, tutoring, networking events and competitive design teams.

Students shone across multiple academic competitions over the past year. A team from the **Master's in Public Policy and Public Administration** won gold for a second consecutive year at the National Public Administration Case Competition, showcasing strong policy analysis and problem-solving skills. The **Concordia Moot Law Society** captured gold at both the Capital Cup and Centre Block Cup, underscoring excellence in legal reasoning and advocacy. Meanwhile, **John Molson undergraduate teams** continued their international success, earning silver at the University of Navarra International Case Competition and the Belgrade Business International Case Competition.

Doctoral candidates **Sara Lucas** and **Kay Ponthieux** are the latest recipients of the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships — one of Canada's highest academic honours. Valued at \$150,000 over three years, the scholarships recognize exceptional academic achievement, leadership and research potential. Lucas and Ponthieux were recognized in 2025 for their innovative work in musicology and history, respectively, highlighting interdisciplinary

approaches that strengthen the understanding of cultural memory, pedagogy and identity within Canadian society.

**Wendy Mbog**, an undergraduate engineering student, won the Délie ta langue! public-speaking competition, taking first place for her presentation on the French expression “Les chiens aboient, la caravane passe.” Representing Concordia at the national finals, Mbog delivered an engaging speech that linked the expression to themes of resilience and perseverance in the face of criticism. Her performance stood out for its clarity, stage presence and persuasive storytelling, earning top honours among finalists from universities across Canada.

**Faculty of Fine Arts students** took part in “Re:Archive,” an interactive installation created in collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) at Nuit Blanche, Montreal's annual all-night art festival. Set up as a participatory digital studio, the work let visitors manipulate archival footage and see their edits instantly projected on surrounding walls.

▼ Artist **Billie du Page** took home a Félix at the 2025 ADISQ Gala for “Révélation de l'année” — Quebec's equivalent of a Grammy Award for Best New Artist. Also nominated for Song of the Year and Album of the Year, she performed during the ceremony, marking a milestone in her career. In between performances and recording sessions, du Page is working towards her BA at Concordia. “When I saw that the Communications program offered a specialization in sound, I knew that was for me,” she says.

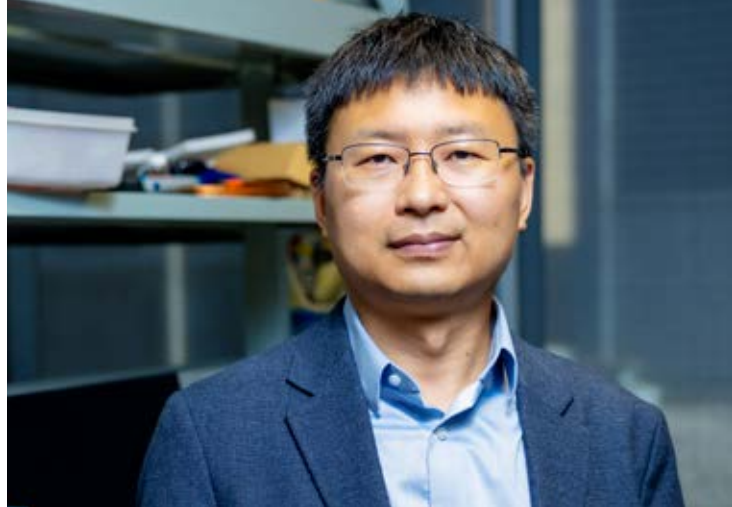


MARIE-MICHÈLE BOUCHARD

## FACULTY HONOURS

► Leadership in environmental engineering, equity and climate research has earned three major honours for a Gina Cody School associate professor. **Chunjian An** received the Leadership and Advocacy for Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Accessibility Award from the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering for his community-engaged work with Indigenous partners. An was also honoured with the Mehran Alaei Early Career Researcher Award from the Chemical Institute of Canada for his research on oil and plastic pollution control and sustainable remediation. Most recently, An received a Dorothy Killam Fellowship — one of Canada's top research honours — for his work on protecting fragile shorelines and advancing spill-response science in Arctic and coastal ecosystems.

**Elena Kuzmin**, assistant professor of biology and Canada Research Chair in Synthetic and Functional Genomics, has been named a member of the Global Young Academy (GYA) — a first for Concordia. The GYA is an international network of early-career scientists recognized for research excellence and leadership. The appointment emphasizes Kuzmin's research on complex genetic interactions — the way mutations in multiple genes combine to influence biological processes, health conditions and disease predisposition. "Being part of the Global Young Academy is an incredible opportunity to contribute to international discussions on science and research while collaborating with top scholars from around the world," she says.



The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council awarded its Impact Award – Partnership to **Jason Edward Lewis**, professor in the Department of Design and Computation Arts, for his leadership in Indigenous-led research-creation. The award, one of Canada's highest honours in the social sciences and humanities, recognizes Lewis's role as co-founder of Concordia's Indigenous Futures Research Centre and for leading major international collaborations such as the Abundant Intelligences program. His work connects artists, scholars, students and Indigenous communities across Canada and around the world, fostering innovative approaches to artificial intelligence, digital media and Indigenous futures.

► Three members of the university community have been inducted into the Royal Society of Canada, joining the ranks of the country's most accomplished scholars, scientists and artists.

**Hannah Claus**, associate professor, Department of Studio Arts, and **Damon Matthews**, professor, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, were named fellows. They were recognized for their work in Indigenous art practices and climate science, respectively. **Hassan Rivaz**, professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, was inducted into the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists for his work in AI-driven medical imaging.

► **Nadia Myre**, professor in Concordia's Department of Studio Arts, and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Art Practice, has been awarded the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas — Quebec's highest honour in visual arts. The award recognizes her nearly 30-year career shaping contemporary Indigenous art practice. An Algonquin member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, Myre is known for landmark works such as *Indian Act* and *The Scar Project*, which explore belonging, memory and reconciliation. The award highlights her influential role as an artist, educator and cultural leader, as well as her impact on decolonizing and expanding contemporary visual arts in Quebec and beyond.





**#1 in Canada**  
best business school

**Top 200**  
in the world  
for sustainability

# ABOUT CONCORDIA

[concordia.ca/about](http://concordia.ca/about)

**#1 in Canada**  
for civil engineering

**Among the best**  
young universities  
in the world

**#5 in Canada**  
for comprehensive  
universities

## **PROMOTING THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Concordia has joined the Decade of Action to achieve the United Nations' ambitious Sustainable Development Goals. The goals draw on our strengths in community health, global literacy, water security, environmental impact and sustainable infrastructure design.

## **ESSENTIAL PLAYER IN MONTREAL**

Concordia's commitment to supporting its city by advancing research-creation, innovation and culture will ensure Montreal's vitality in the years ahead.

## DIVERSE AND ENGAGED STUDENTS

In Montreal, one of North America's favourite student cities, the critical mass of youthful enthusiasm creates a palpable feeling that anything is possible.

**50,000**  
students

**11,000+**  
international students

**4,400+**  
co-op students

**150**  
countries represented

## FACULTY WITH STRONG TIES TO INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY

Whether working with businesses or people, the most enriching learning involves hands-on experiences beyond the classroom, ensuring the material is always current and relevant.

**2,250+**  
professors and librarians

**130+**  
research chairs and professorships

**\$131.5 million**  
sponsored research income

## BLACK PERSPECTIVES

Concordia is dedicated to addressing and challenging anti-Black systemic racism and being inclusive and accessible to Black students, staff and faculty and fostering relationships with Black communities.

**Dozens of**  
courses focused on Black, Indigenous  
and People of Colour

**1968**  
Concordia Caribbean  
Students' Union founded

**2,200+**  
items in the Negro Community  
Centre Archives

## DECOLONIZATION AND INDIGENIZATION

Concordia acknowledges that it is situated on unceded Indigenous lands and recognizes the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation as the custodians of the surrounding lands and waters. The university is committed to truth and reconciliation and ongoing Indigenous issues.

**1st**  
First Peoples major  
in Quebec

**1992**  
Aboriginal  
centre opens

**5**  
Indigenous bridging  
program pathways

**30**  
Indigenous graduate  
scholarships



# THE FUTURE OF GIVING

## INSPIRING PHILANTHROPY

As charitable giving across Canada continued to face significant drops, Concordia experienced one of the strongest periods of philanthropic engagement in its history.

This momentum was shaped in part by the successful conclusion of the **Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now**, the most ambitious fundraising effort to be undertaken by our university. Launched with an initial goal of \$250 million, the campaign exceeded expectations, leading Concordia to raise its target to a record-setting \$350 million.

By the time the campaign concluded on September 30, 2025, it had raised \$365 million through the generosity of more than 47,000 donors who supported students, research, teaching and learning across the university. This success was also made possible by the leadership of our co-chairs, Chancellor Gina Cody, MEng 81, PhD 89, Andrew Molson and Lino A. Saputo, BA 89, as well as other key staff and volunteers.

Throughout 2025, Concordia continued to see strong donor participation, with more than \$50 million raised for the year. This included significant gains in first-time donors and major commitments, as well as widespread community engagement initiatives such as Giving Tuesday 2025, when 1,608 donors gave \$632,000 in support of 92 Concordia-wide causes.

Together, our fundraising success reflects a decade-long trajectory of sustained growth, which underscores the confidence our community places in Concordia and its mission.

Most importantly, our achievements translate into greater access to education, stronger research capacity and enriched learning environments. They stem from a shared belief in what philanthropy can accomplish.

The stories and milestones that follow reflect a future of giving at Concordia that is strong, resilient and filled with promise.

**Paul Chesser**, BA 94, GrDip 97  
Vice-President, Advancement

## André Desmarais gives \$6 million to empower research at Concordia

► André Desmarais, BComm 78, LLD 07, deputy chairman of Power Corporation of Canada, is not one to seek attention for his family's philanthropy.

Yet his \$6-million planned gift to his alma mater and the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now in 2025 sent a powerful message about the long-term value of investing in higher education.

His gift will further endow the France and André Desmarais Graduate Fellowships, established in 2001 by Desmarais and his wife, France Chrétien Desmarais, LLD 15.

Open to outstanding master's and doctoral students from all faculties, the fellowships have already supported more than 100 graduate students pursuing research across disciplines from engineering and business to the arts and social sciences.

"I'm deeply attached to Concordia because it truly gave me my start in life," says Desmarais. "I wasn't an exemplary student before — far from it — and other universities probably wouldn't have accepted me. But Concordia gave me a chance."

Two renowned and influential professors transformed how he saw learning. "Thanks to Henry Habib and Howard Ripstein, I began to take my studies seriously. Suddenly, everything became interesting and worthwhile — they changed my life."

Those early lessons at Concordia continue to guide Desmarais's philanthropy today. With his new planned gift, his support for Concordia now totals \$14.5 million.

"I give widely — across arts, education, medicine, conservation — to support the pillars of a strong and vibrant society," he says. "And Concordia has become one of those pillars for me."



Beyond his alma mater, Desmarais has been active in campaigns for the Montreal Children's Hospital, Montreal Heart Institute, Canadian Red Cross, Moisson Montréal and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

He helped launch La Ferme des Quatre-Temps, an experimental organic farm in Hemmingford, Quebec, designed to show that small-scale, sustainable agriculture can be profitable. Another passion is African Parks, which protects more than 49 million acres of land across Africa.

Despite this extensive philanthropic footprint, Desmarais shrugs off talk of legacy.

"I don't personally believe in that word. We're here for a limited time — so let's do the best we can while we're around. If you want to make a difference, do it while you're alive, when you can actually see the impact.

"I give where the leadership is strong and the results speak for themselves. And you remember who gave you your start. For me, that was Concordia." ■

*Enjoy testimonials from donors and other campaign-related videos at*  
**[concordia.ca/alumni/videos](https://concordia.ca/alumni/videos)**.

# SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

## MAJOR GIFTS TO THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA: NEXT-GEN NOW

Learn more about our culture of philanthropy at [concordia.ca/giving](https://concordia.ca/giving).

### CORPORATE GIFTS

**Rodolphe Saadé**, BComm 94, LLD 23, chairman and CEO of **CMA CGM**, made a gift of **\$1,365,900** to fund scholarships for international graduate students.

A contribution of **\$500,000** from **Manulife Canada** will fund the Manulife Sustainable Investing Practicum at the John Molson School of Business.

**Bentley Systems** contributed a total of **\$175,087** to support interdisciplinary research in sustainable urban development at the Next-Generation Cities Institute.

**Wildfire Group Holdings Inc.** contributed **\$100,000** to establish the Wildfire Group Scholarship in Business, which will support students at the John Molson School.

**Bell** made a **\$60,000** donation to the Creative Arts Therapy Community Partnership Fund, enabling the Department of Creative Arts Therapies to sustain and expand its network of community-based programs offering art, music, drama and play therapy to diverse populations across Montreal.

**Richard MacKay**, BA 58, contributed **\$50,380** in support of the Richard Mackay Men's Basketball Fund in honour of coach Mag Flynn. In partnership with Friends of Concordia Men's Basketball, this gift strengthens Concordia's ability to provide resources that help student athletes excel academically and athletically while celebrating Coach Flynn's long-standing impact on the program.

**BFL Canada** donated **\$50,000** to support the Barry F. Lorenzetti Centre for Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership at the John Molson School. ■





## FOUNDATION GIFTS

### **\$130,000 from Aune family supports women MBAs at Concordia**

▲ The Aune family and its 11:11 Charitable Foundation gave \$130,000 to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now in 2025 to ensure the growth and impact of the Ruth P. Glenen Awards. This builds upon past commitments made in 2019 and 2022 totaling more than \$300,000.

The awards, which support women MBA candidates at the John Molson School of Business, honour the late Ruth Glenen, BA 80, MBA 85.

A native of Montreal's East End, Glenen began her career as a secretary at Nesbitt Thomson and worked her way up to treasurer. Known for her combination of tough love and pragmatic advice, she guided students through their studies and early careers, often inviting them into her home.

Trevor Aune, vice-president of 11:11 Charitable Foundation, emphasizes that the awards that bear his aunt's name are about more than financial support.

"The most exciting thing that we are really focusing on now is building a community," he says. "We're bringing together past and current recipients, giving them a chance to network, mentor each other and have another outlet outside of school or professional life to share developments in their careers."

Trevor's sister, Shayna Phetsarath, BA 99, is leading 11:11's efforts to expand the reach of the Glenen Awards. Last fall, two recipients from the University of British Columbia joined the cohort.

Her approach draws in part on lessons from her time at Concordia.

"The school's strong curriculum and variety of programs helped me find my way, even when I wasn't sure what to study," says Shayna. "I met incredible people and had a great experience, and I saw first-hand how much a supportive community can shape your path."

The family's most recent gift to Concordia reflects the vision of Trevor and Shayna's late uncle Brian Aune, Ruth Glenen's husband. The former chairman and CEO of Nesbitt Thomson served on Concordia's Board of Governors from 1988 to 2002, and his approach to philanthropy shaped the foundation's work.

"Our uncle's motto was, 'Business is people and money — if you have the right people, the money takes care of itself,'" says Trevor. "We approach philanthropy the same way, supporting people who are passionate and capable." ■

The **Wilson Foundation** made a **\$3-million** gift to establish the Henry Habib Diplomacy Accelerator Endowment in the Department of Political Science.

A gift of **\$2,311,513** from the **Fondation Sandra et Alain Bouchard** will establish the Sandra and Alain Bouchard Professorship in Creative Arts Therapies and create graduate student awards in the field.

The **Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation** contributed **\$468,972** to fund post-graduate fellowships for new MFA or PhD graduates.

The **McCall MacBain Foundation** donated **\$390,000** to renew support for the Homeroom Program, Concordia's flagship first-year transition initiative.

The **KPMG Foundation** made a **\$350,000** gift to support the Business Decarbonization Initiative at the John Molson School of Business. The audit, tax and advisory firm provided a further **\$150,000** in in-kind services.

The **Luigi Liberatore Foundation** donated **\$125,000** to support the 2025 Concordia Golf Classic.

A gift of **\$105,000** from the **Rideau Hall Foundation** will support student exchanges and experiential learning through Concordia's Sustainable Polygeneration for Communities Initiative, which focuses on renewable energy and resilience in the face of climate change.

The **Azrieli Foundation** contributed **\$100,000** to the Frederick Lowy Scholars Endowment.

The **Naim S. Mahlab Foundation** contributed **\$100,000** in support of the Naim Mahlab Fellowships Endowment.

The **Vinesh Saxena Family Foundation** contributed **\$75,000** to launch the Vinesh Saxena Family Foundation Lecture Series, exploring themes of the soul and consciousness.



### **Dominic D'Alessandro's endowment for Concordia graduate awards reaches \$10 million**

► Dominic D'Alessandro, BSc 67, LLD 98, the former long-time president and CEO of Manulife Financial, has committed \$6 million to establish a historic, first-of-its-kind PhD awards program at his alma mater. With this latest donation, his total endowment for graduate awards at Concordia now exceeds \$10 million.

The significant contribution will support students pursuing research-focused PhDs in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and finance, offering them scholarships that will rival Canada's top academic awards in monetary value.

The Dominic D'Alessandro PhD Awards are designed to provide financial support to top-tier doctoral students and are expected to set a new benchmark for academic excellence in Canada. The endowment will fund 10 awards annually, each valued at \$50,000.

"This gift will ensure that Concordia's brightest minds in STEM and finance have the resources to achieve their full potential," says Concordia President Graham Carr. "Intrepid as a leader, Dominic D'Alessandro has long been a champion of innovation and education. This remarkably generous contribution will have a lasting impact on students, researchers and the broader community. We are deeply grateful for his unwavering support and vision for the future of Concordia and Canada."



The D'Alessandro Awards will provide a much-needed boost to Concordia's efforts to attract and retain world-class talent. With an emphasis on innovation and research, the awards are designed to propel top students into academic and professional careers that will contribute to trailblazing research and advancements in their respective fields.

"Education has always been a priority for me," says D'Alessandro, who served as president and CEO of Manulife Financial from 1994 to 2009. "I'm proud to support Concordia, my alma mater, and I believe these awards will help the next generation of students excel in their studies and contribute to the innovation economy. Concordia has always had the spirit of pushing boundaries, and I'm excited to see the impact these awards will have." ■

**André Desmarais**, BComm 78, LLD 07, deputy chairman of Power Corporation of Canada, donated **\$1.6 million** to support the France and André Desmarais Graduate Fellowships, as well as **\$500,000** to support the Henry Habib Diplomacy Accelerator Endowment in the Department of Political Science.

**John Sicard**, BCompSc 88, DSc 24, and **Pina Sicard**, BA 87, committed **\$1 million** to support initiatives at the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science, including new endowments for students with autism spectrum disorder, entrance awards and a fellowship to advance research and innovation in supply chain and logistics. Their gift will also bolster the school's Innovation Program.

**Sam Kersheh**, BComm 94, and his sister **Paula Kersheh** contributed **\$314,500** to establish the Kersheh Family Endowment for Student Awards at the John Molson School of Business.

**Jacques Bournival**, BFA 79, donated **\$75,000** to establish the Prix Jacques Bournival en cinéma francophone. The award will support students in Film Production at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema and encourage excellence in francophone filmmaking.

A gift of **\$50,000** from **Andrea E. Bolger**, MBA 86, will support Career Management Services at the John Molson School.

A gift of **\$50,000** from **Jeffrey Soliman**, BComm 08, will support the Jeffrey Soliman Dean's Fund.

**Anatol M. von Hahn**, BComm 81, donated **\$30,312** in support of the Case Competitions General Fund at the John Molson School, enabling students to participate in academic competitions that develop practical skills and experiential learning opportunities.

A gift of **\$25,000** from **Michael R. Dufort**, BEng 85, will support the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science Development Fund.

A gift of **\$25,000** from **Naveed Irshad**, BSc 93, will renew the Irshad Family In-Course Scholarship in Actuarial Mathematics.

**Lillian Mauer** gave **\$25,000** to the Lillian and Billy Mauer Fund for Conversations in Contemporary Art offered through the Department of Studio Arts.

**Pardo Mustillo**, BA 79, MA 81, PhD 86, donated **\$25,000** to the Mustillo–D'Onofrio Bursary. Established in honour of his parents, the bursary supports new refugees and immigrants pursuing undergraduate studies.

**Richard D. Paterson**, BComm 64, gave **\$25,000** to John Molson School case competitions.

**Erik Van Der Kaay**, BSc 62, and **Mary Jo Van Der Kaay** have created a major new endowment that will provide support for more than a dozen undergraduate science students annually. The Erik and Mary Jo Van Der Kaay Endowment will offer merit-based scholarships to students beginning a Bachelor of Science degree, ensuring sustained assistance for future generations of Concordia learners.



## PLANNED GIFTS AND GIFTS-IN-KIND

### Hani and Laïla Farag honour educator fathers with planned gift to Concordia

► For Hani B. Farag, BComm 76, and Laïla Ward Farag, giving back to Concordia is a way to honour two extraordinary educators whose legacies continue to shape young minds.

Their planned gift will support the Berti Farag Science Excellence Award and the André Ward Award for Excellence in Teaching English as a Second Language, both offered through the Faculty of Arts and Science.

The existing awards — previously established by the couple's philanthropic Farag & Ward Foundation — recognize exceptional student achievement in the Department of Biology and Department of Education respectively.

“Laïla and I want these awards to go on perpetually — even after we're gone — as they carry deep family significance for us,” says Hani.

Berti Farag and André Ward immigrated to Canada in the mid-1960s. They seized opportunities to build better lives for their families and contribute meaningfully to the Montreal community.

Hani's father, Berti, was a devoted teacher who inspired countless students in Egypt and in Montreal. He eventually joined Lindsay Place High School in Pointe-Claire, where he spent 16 years sharing his passion for science.

Laïla's father, André, taught history and geography at Collège André Grasset and Collège de Montréal, guiding generations of students with wisdom and purpose.



The Farags' bequest will ensure that future students continue to benefit from the encouragement that shaped their own families.

“Montreal welcomed our fathers,” says Hani. “As immigrants, assimilation, hard work and commitment were guiding principles — and that is what opened doors for us as their children.

“We were very fortunate and are now happy to be able to give back.” ■

*Learn more about planned giving at Concordia at [concordia.ca/plannedgiving](https://concordia.ca/plannedgiving).*

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Learn about our latest news and events by following **@ConcordiaAlumni** on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. **#CUalumni #CUpride**

Watch our videos at [concordia.ca/alumni/videos](http://concordia.ca/alumni/videos).

Discover what Concordia achieved first in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and the world: [concordia.ca/firsts](http://concordia.ca/firsts).



A major planned gift from **René Balcer**, BA 78, LLD 08, and **Carolyn Hsu** will support the Department of Communication Studies and establish the René Balcer Archives, which will preserve decades of creative work for research, teaching and public access.

A planned gift of **\$308,670** from **Silvia Ugolini** and **Robert Paliotti** will equally support the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities Development Fund and the School of Health Development Fund.

A bequest of **\$125,000** from **Patricia A. Thornton** will support undergraduate students in the Department of Geography.

**Jim Haiman**, BComm 78, GrDip 79, made a bequest of **\$120,000** to support Concordia's Greatest Needs.

**Constantine J. Kouvertaris**, MEng 80, made a planned gift of **\$120,000**.

**Manon Lamontagne**, BA 81, made a planned gift of **\$120,000**.

A bequest of **\$81,515** from the **Estate of Tibor Javory** will be directed to Concordia's Greatest Needs.

The **Estate of Frank Stephen Boyd Whittall** gave **\$71,248** towards Concordia's Greatest Needs. Frank Whittall earned a Bachelor of Commerce from Sir George Williams University in 1953.

A planned gift from **Philip W. Harden**, BA 74, will support the Library Development Fund.

The **Estate of Maryse Lafontaine** provided support for scholarships, bursaries and fellowships at Concordia.

A planned gift from **Brenda J. Laow**, BA 64, will support Concordia's Greatest Needs.

A planned gift from **Immacolata (Mackie) Vadacchino**, BComm 82, MBA 84, and **Michel Robert de Massy** will support the Mackie I. Vadacchino engAGE Fund for Empowered Aging, as well as the John Molson School of Business Fund.

### **GIFTS-IN-KIND**

A gift-in-kind valued at **\$1.38 million** from **Altus Group** provides access to its industry-leading Argus Software for students studying real estate at the John Molson School of Business. This contribution will strengthen applied-learning opportunities and student readiness for the property and valuation sectors.

**CDN Isotopes Inc.** donated equipment valued at **\$112,500** to the Department of Chemistry in the Faculty of Arts and Science. The in-kind gift of a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) machine enhances the university's research and teaching infrastructure in the chemical sciences.

**John N. Gilmore**, BFA 81, and **Patricia Lynne Woodburn**, BA 04, donated archival materials to Concordia Libraries and Archives from writer, editor, photographer and Department of English professor Terence Byrnes, MA 80. The gifts-in-kind are respectively valued at **\$42,375** and **\$34,050**.



# AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS



## ACADEMY AWARDS

▲ **Maciek Szczerbowski**, BFA 94 (pictured above, right), who co-created *The Girl Who Cried Pearls* with Chris Lavis, won the 2026 Oscar for Best Animated Short Film. His team included fellow Concordia alumni: stop-motion animators **Laura Stewart**, BFA 14, **Laura Venditti**, BFA 15, and former student **Peggy Arel**. Mould-making and casting were led by **Erik Goulet**, BFA 90, and **Mélissa Rousseau**, BFA 21, and **Kamil Chajder**, BFA 12, contributed to composing and visual effects.

## GRAMMY AWARDS

**Serban Ghenea**, BFA 92, DFA 25, audio engineer and mixer, received his 24th Grammy Award — the latest is for his work on Lady Gaga's "Abracadabra," which won the 2026 Best Dance Pop Recording.

▶ **Chase Worrell**, BA 22, served as producer and co-writer of "Overqualified," a track off *Bloom*, the LP from Durand Bernarr that won the 2026 Grammy for Best Progressive R&B album. This marks Worrell's second Grammy Award.

## VENICE BIENNALE

Interdisciplinary artist **Abbas Akhavan**, BFA 04, was selected to represent Canada at the 2026 Venice Biennale — one of the world's most prestigious contemporary-art events. Akhavan's presentation was installed at the historic Canada Pavilion.

## PRIMETIME EMMYS

**Jessica Lee Gagné**, BFA 12, made history as the first woman to win the Emmy for Outstanding Cinematography for a Series (One Hour). She was recognized in 2025 for her visual work on Apple TV+'s *Severance*.

**Barry Julien**, BA 94, earned a 2025 Emmy as co-executive producer of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, which won Outstanding Talk Series.

**Antoni Porowski**, BA 08, earned a 2025 Creative Arts Emmy Award for Outstanding Structured Reality Program in his role as one of the executive producers of *Queer Eye*.

## ORDRE NATIONAL DU QUÉBEC

Four distinguished members of the Concordia community were named to the Ordre national du Québec in 2025. The honour recognizes individuals whose achievements have contributed to the province's growth, reputation and development across a wide spectrum of fields.

**Peter A. Howlett**, BA 63

**Chantal Hébert**, LLD 14

**Serge Chapleau**, LLD 18

**Farah Alibay**, DSc 23

## ORDER OF CANADA

Nine members of the Concordia community were among the latest appointees to the Order of Canada announced in 2025. The country's top honour recognizes exceptional contributions to the country.

**Rosalie Silberman Abella**, LLD 91, Companion

**Praveen K. Jain**, Officer

**Karim Zaghbi**, Officer

**Reesa Greenberg**, Member

**James William Hewitt**, Member

**Martha A. Langford**, Member

**Barry F. Lorenzetti**, Member

**Mahesh Chandra Sharma**, Member

**Barry Truax**, Member



# CONCORDIA AT 50

A number of special events were organized and held in 2025 as part of Concordia's 50th-anniversary commemorations.



## THE IMMIGRANT PARADOX

**1** In a Canadian first, “**The Immigrant Paradox**,” a recorded panel discussion between Concordia scholars produced as part of the Thinking Out Loud series, was screened in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver for alumni and Cineplex audiences. *Learn more at [concordia.ca/alumni/videos](https://concordia.ca/alumni/videos).*



## HONOURING BLACK PRESENCE

**2** **Charles Campbell**, BFA 92, the first artist selected for Concordia's Honouring Black Presence public art program, spoke at the unveiling of his Hall Building installation *Those that pass through, remain, return*. (More on page 8)

## EDWARD BURTYNSKY AT WILD TALKS

**3** World-renowned photographer **Edward Burtynsky** spoke with **Zoë Tousignant**, BFA 03, PhD 13, curator of photography at the McCord Stewart Museum, for the university's 50th anniversary and Wild Talks.

## CAMPAIGN CLOSE EVENT

**4** The Concordia community celebrated the official close of the \$365-million **Next-Gen Now** campaign and the university's **50th anniversary** at Maison Alcan on September 25.



## FIRST, BUT NOT THE LAST

This video series celebrates Concordia alumni who were the first in their families to graduate from university — trailblazers whose achievements opened doors far beyond their own. In short interviews, they reflect on the challenges they faced, the support they found and the pride of reaching a milestone that reshaped what was possible for those who followed.

Learn more at [concordia.ca/firstinfamily](https://concordia.ca/firstinfamily).

## GREAT CONCORDIANS

Among the ranks of Concordia's worldwide network of alumni are a Nobel Peace Prize co-laureate, a multiple Tony Award winner, a member of the Senate of Canada, Rhodes Scholars and countless visionary researchers and entrepreneurs. Fifty of these extraordinary individuals were celebrated as part of the Great Concordians initiative from June 2024 to September 2025 to mark the 50th anniversary of Concordia. Accomplished across a wide range of disciplines — from the arts and social justice to science, technology and business — honourees showcase the breadth of talent and leadership that Concordia has nurtured over the decades. Learn more at [concordia.ca/greatconcordians](https://concordia.ca/greatconcordians).

## CONCORDIA FIRSTS

Concordians aren't just making their mark — they're making history. Across disciplines and around the world, they've been the first to push boundaries, challenge the status quo and redefine what's possible. From science and technology to business and sustainability, from cinema and the arts to athletics and engineering, alumni, faculty and students continue to lead the way. Explore the bold firsts that have helped shape Montreal, Quebec, Canada and beyond over the past 50 years. Learn more at [concordia.ca/firsts](https://concordia.ca/firsts). ■





## ALUMNI WITH IMPACT: CAROLINE MARK HELPS SHAPE A FUTURE GUIDED BY CREE VALUES

For Caroline Mark, BA 98, MBA 13, director general of the Cree School Board, education goes beyond academics — it's a lifelong mission rooted in Cree values and the belief that *Eeyou/Eenou Chiskutamaachewin* empowers nation-building and reconciliation.

"For the Cree people, education is about healing, empowerment and self-determination," she says. "It's about knowing who you are."

Born in Chibougamau and raised on the land by her grandparents, Mark grew up grounded in Cree culture, language and respect for the land. She later attended Concordia, earning a BA in Applied Human Sciences and an MBA.

The university's inclusive, real-world learning environment helped Mark see leadership as service. Today, as director general of the Cree School Board serving nine Cree communities, she ensures learning reflects Cree language, culture and worldview.

"We educate the whole person — body, mind, soul and spirit — and make sure what we do is rooted in culture and language," she says.

Under her leadership, the board has expanded holistic supports including meal programs, tutoring, extracurriculars, driver's education, counselling, tuition assistance, childcare and employment connections.

After nearly 25 years with the board, Mark continues to view education as the foundation of nation-building, helping secure funding for new schools and adult-learning centres.

"Concordia taught me to lead with empathy, accountability and respect," she says. "Those lessons guide me as we create the conditions for our students to succeed and contribute to their communities with pride." ■



“A university is not just buildings and faculty — it’s a community of supporters, and that’s what I want to help build.”

— Michel Valois, BComm 85, MBA 87, made a \$2-million planned gift to Concordia’s School of Health in 2026.



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# CONCORDIA

CONCORDIA

**PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT 2026**



UNIVERSITÉ  
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