

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF  
THE COUNCIL OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH**

**December 4, 3035 at 3:00pm  
PC 2.405 and Zoom**

PRESENT

Voting members:

V. Pepin (Chair), T. Evans, A. Champagne, A. Piekny, R. Reilly (online), C. Bruce (online), L. Kadem (online), S. Granger (online), L. Barker (online), M. D'Amico (online), S. Shih (online), A. W. Mudiyansele, K. Toledano, C. Plissonneau (online)

Non-voting members:

K. Dunfield, K. Hall (online), S. De Celles (online), L. Roy (Secretary), A. Mantis (Recording Secretary)

REGRETS

Voting members:

G. Carr, E. Diamantoudi, J-P. Gouin

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

Moved and seconded (A. Champagne, A. Piekny). Carried.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of October 30, 2025**

Moved and seconded (M. D'Amico, C. Bruce). Carried.

**4. Chair's Remarks**

The chair provided a brief follow up regarding the curriculum files approved at the last Council meeting. The curriculum files did not move forward to the GCC or APC. The reason provided for this is that the School of Health has not yet been officially declared as a teaching unit with the Ministry through GDUNO and does not have any programs yet to which the courses would have been attached. This is an exceptional circumstance related to the emerging status of the SOH. A. Champagne will later speak to how he has pivoted to allow the SOH to achieve the same goal of offering transdisciplinary courses by working in collaboration with other academic units.

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The chair highlighted the announcement made in the SOH News Bulletin on November 7<sup>th</sup> regarding the Imaging Suite. The Chair specified that the SOH leadership met with each impacted researcher before this announcement was made publicly. V. Pepin and A. Piekny discussed next steps with each researcher to ensure their research program related to imaging can continue to move forward through different venues. The SOH is continuing to work with these researchers, and it is not necessarily the same solution for every researcher impacted. From an HR perspective, there was no impact as both incumbents in the Imaging Suite had already left their positions at the university. The SOH has found a few technicians that can help with the last few months of life for the pieces of equipment.

The chair briefed council on the December 2<sup>nd</sup> event: School of Health Recycled Poster Rendez-Vous: Health Research Hangout. The event was aimed towards the SOH members; approximately 50 people attended the event. There were light snacks and refreshments prepared in-house by the Nutrition Suite. The feedback from both researchers and students was very positive and the SOH leadership was satisfied with the turnout, given that this “recycle your poster” event was a first of its kind to be organized by the SOH.

### **5. Presentation: Associate Dean, Research and Infrastructure**

A. Piekny gave a presentation about her role as Associate Dean, Research and Infrastructure. She provided a brief overview of the portfolio, starting with a description of her mandate, which is to promote, enhance and facilitate health research and optimize School of Health infrastructure by supporting research, experiential learning (hands-on training and internships), academic activities, and community program goals.

A. Piekny highlighted recent past accomplishments (for research) which included organizing two successful annual conferences and building internal and external partnerships with research centres and institutes, including the Tahatikonshontóntie’ Quebec Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (QcNEIHR). The SOH also co-hosted events such as the Gairdner Lectures, and the Debate Watch Party with the Canadian Medical Association. There was a biweekly News Bulletin created to disseminate information to the SOH members. Additionally, the SOH helped increase visibility of health research at Concordia by updating our website, creating and sharing researcher spotlight videos, and amplifying our social media presence; and supporting research through funding calls, individual or Department-level support for grant applications (e.g., CRC). She also formed the School of Health Research Committee (SRC), whose role will include to help define strategic research directions in health.

A. Piekny elaborated on future plans, such as the annual conference on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 (with Rabia Khan as the keynote speaker) and co-hosting a conference in March 2026 with the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability, and Loyola Sustainability Research Centre. The goal is to

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continue to build internal and external partnerships. The SOH also has a current research funding call; given the current budgetary climate, the main goal of this year's call is to help increase student recruitment, since 70% (minimally) of funds must be spent on recruiting new students or increasing the graduation rate of current students. Lastly, the focus this year is on defining strategic research directions in health with the SRC, with the goal of aligning these with the university's strategic directions as well as strategic investments at the Provincial and Federal level.

A. Piekny outlined the infrastructure aspect of her role which consists of developing and maintaining a long-term strategic plan for the research platforms in the PC building. In the past two years, an intense review of activities and infrastructure has led to changes within some of the suites – e.g., some lab spaces have been designated to individuals, streamlining staffing needs and cost-sharing, making the PC building more efficient with cost-savings. It was explained that the replenishment of critical infrastructure encompassed matching contributions for two external NSERC RTI grants and the acquisition of roughly \$700k in external funding through an infrastructure renewal initiative. Lastly, as strategic areas are identified, spaces will be redesigned to support those areas – the building is well-designed for any type of research or research creation involving human participants.

A. Piekny concluded that these initiatives in research and infrastructure will collectively advance Concordia's strength in health research by increasing visibility, engagement, and collaboration across disciplines; strengthening internal and external networks; growing student involvement and support; and, providing a foundation for strategic directions and increased funding opportunities.

R. Reilly inquired about the spaces that will be redesigned and what usage the SOH is wishing for with these spaces. A. Piekny explained that the SOH will identify need as the strategic directions are developed. It would make sense to have space that centres around researchers who need to work with people (i.e. applied human research), though there is nothing concrete at this point. The SOH intends to consult with its members to ascertain need along with recommendations.

T. Evans reported that it is important to have a conversation with FRQ Santé regarding strategic direction as there appears to be a big focus on prevention and promotion outside of the hospital system, an area where Concordia is well-positioned.

It was noted that the Office of the VRPII expects its resources to be strained in the current context, particularly regarding undergraduate awards. As a result, they plan to reposition and rebrand the “Undergraduate Research Awards” as “Next-Gen Scholars.” Development of this initiative will take place over the next few months in collaboration with donors. The aim is to encourage greater undergraduate engagement in research, potentially culminating in a research

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scholars evening where donors can see the impressive work students have produced. Council members with ideas, comments, or suggestions are invited to contact Jeremy Lemieux or Tim Evans.

K. Dunfield also mentioned that establishing this as a perpetual endowment would require approximately \$36K (though this figure was from 5 years ago, and likely increased).

### **6. Presentation: Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Student Services**

A. Champagne gave a presentation about his role as Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Student Services. He explained that the SOH's goal is to expand transdisciplinary health teaching and training with programs connecting and tapping expertise across the whole university. PhD programs would serve Research Units to connect faculty via graduate students to generate larger transdisciplinary teams (innovation pipelines). Course-based programs designed to fit professional practice needs while not connected to a "department" or discipline but intended to create new recruitment pathway – more Institutional visibility in Health.

It was explained that any SOH program created must be positive for all four faculties. The goal is to develop SOH courses/programs that can only operate and blossom fully in the SOH (with no competition with our partner four Faculties) and create mid-sized to large programs that will demonstrably attract new students to Concordia (financially sound).

A. Champagne gave an overview of the School of Health Academic Programs Committee membership, and their roles and responsibilities. The SAPC is a faculty-level curriculum committee and a program management committee. Since the SOH does not have any departments, the SAPC combines the department-level roles (academic design, use expertise of members) and Faculty-level roles (check broader institutional/external context, resources, strategic directions).

An overview of the progress of the committee included that the submitted curriculum proposals for "slot" (special topics) courses in October 2025 did not move forward, as previously mentioned, due to the SOH not being declared as a teaching unit. Though, an alternate approach has been determined where A. Champagne is approaching Faculties to seek permission to "sponsor" a few special topics courses in their programs. If it works, we will discuss with the relevant Units and provide an update at a later date.

Additionally, the SOH needs a foundational PhD program to start delivering on the promise of having impact on health research at Concordia University. After 9+ months of intense consultations (faculty members, research Units, Departments, Faculties, SGS), a LOI was submitted in May 2025: PhD in Biomedical and Biological Sciences and Engineering. Approval of the LOI was received on November 24th, 2025. The SOH started working with curriculum

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developer Dalian Radwan, where data on job market info and a student survey will be collected, and circle back to the community to write the full proposal in Winter 2026.

It was determined that the SOH can offer courses via “programs”, so the SOH would like to create tiny programs (micro-credentials) – when relevant – consisting of a few or even a single course. The first one is a 3-cr micro-credential (graduate level), with a tentative title: Introduction to Public Health in Quebec. The SOH is working with the SGS (Gina Beltran and Ryan Angrove) and the SAPC to write rapidly a LOI (with surveys of the job market and comparable programs), with hopes to submit a LOI in January.

A. Champagne mentioned that the SOH is welcoming of ideas, and to please share anything that seems promising. For example, a current idea, promoted by T. Evans, is a micro-program in Health Entrepreneurship (likely to be hosted outside of the SOH). Other interests include exploring other potential PhD programs, perhaps around Urban Health and Wellbeing.

Aside from programs, a 2026 call for student awards aimed at triggering additional graduate admissions is in development. If courses are sponsored and/or offered in 2026–2027, efforts will center on developing a SOH student community through committees and events. There is also a plan to organize a grad fair in 2026 to increase awareness of Health opportunities across Concordia and help retain top students within the university.

L. Kadem asked if there has been any involvement from external stakeholders. A. Champagne said some, but it is limited. We have people connected with externals, but there is no advisory board yet. This is on V. Pepin’s radar. The curriculum developer is at least providing external feedback to the SOH’s ideas through research of external venues.

T. Evans getting a sense of demand is important regarding where talent is needed, and what supply. He explained that he ran into a Concordia HKAP alumnus that is now a surgeon. It might be worthwhile to work with Advancement to look at alumni pioneering health. These alumni might have reflections and ideas with respect to how Concordia can position itself in the education space. This could perhaps serve as adjunct or affiliate to provide insight into some programs. He elaborated that the INDI program is brilliant for mature students. It might be possible to work with INDI leadership to see if we can develop a health track. This could be marketed more systematically. A more mature learner might be more interested in this avenue. A. Champagne mentioned that the SOH website lists all health-related programs for recruitment purposes, and INDI was included in this. This page is used as a recruitment and information platform. K. Dunfield added that they have used INDI programs as a pilot, to show what could be offered, and eventually these programs were created.

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S. Shih raised a question regarding the PhD program, as there must have been reviews of similar offerings elsewhere. It is assumed that the SOH's program will differentiate itself, but how? What skills are we planning to prioritize, and what are students expecting to gain? They will graduate at a time when AI raises concerns about future opportunities. Has a plan B been considered regarding potential career paths for these graduates? A. Champagne explained that this will be addressed as part of the market survey. The program will not be approved unless there is a demonstrated job market for graduates in Canada.

### **7. Updates and Announcements**

V. Pepin reiterated that participation is needed for the sustainability event in March. This conference attracts 300-400 participants.

R. Reilly provided an update that their unit got permission to move forward with their LOI in Community Engaged Research for Social Justice and are looking for it to support their upcoming CIHR CRC position. The application deadline was extended for this position to ensure that their candidate pool is large. They are looking at a portion of these PhD spots to be within the health sector, particular health disparities as there is an emphasis on social justice.

### **8. Adjournment**

Moved and seconded (V. Pepin, A. Piekny). Carried.  
The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

**Next meeting: January 15, 2026, 3:00-4:30pm, GM 930.48 and Zoom**

Respectfully submitted,

Anthoula Mantis  
Recording Secretary  
Council of the School of Health