

Progress on strategies in Sustainability in Research Plan

Advance interdisciplinary research opportunities in sustainability

Target: Develop a framework to support interdisciplinary sustainability research at Concordia

Strategy 1: Map existing sustainability research activities, strengths, and resources within the University

A mapping exercise has been conducted for the 2022-23 academic year and will be included in the university's next STARS report. The list provided in the last STARS (2021) report was updated by the staff of the Associate Vice-President Research, Development and Outreach. Entries were cross-referenced with the Explore Concordia database.; further queries in SCOPUS Concordia targeting sustainability-related studies yielded additional entries. Only full-time faculty were taken into account as they have a direct mandate to conduct research as part of their workload.

Strategy 2: In consultation with key stakeholders, coordinate the development of a supportive framework to extend and enhance interdisciplinary sustainability networking, collaboration, and research

An exciting new interdisciplinary initiative involving Concordia University and its partners secured the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) grant entitled [Electrifying Society: Towards Resilient Decarbonized Communities](#) (ERDC) effective March 1, 2023. Its aim is to accelerate and optimize the transition to decarbonized resilient communities – entailing design and integration of proven or new technologies for smart carbon-neutral buildings, smart and secured grids, energy storage, energy management, integration of distributed renewable energy resources, and electrification of transportation, while emphasizing innovation, affordability, equity, and the well-being of society

Strategy 3: Develop an interdisciplinary graduate program in sustainability that allows cosupervision and mentorship from all four Faculties (Curriculum Strategy 6)

The school of graduate studies have begun preliminary discussions and collaborations on an idea to put together a 6 or 9 credit microprogram in sustainability at the graduate level, with the audience being current graduate students and professionals already holding a Bachelor's degree. The intention is for the program to involve a 3-credit team-taught and/or guest-lecture-based course, while the other 3 or 6 credits for the program would be project-based, aiming for students to benefit from the variety of expertise in sustainability across disciplines at Concordia.

Increase institutional incentives and support

Target: Increase financial and operational support for faculty and students engaged in sustainability research

Strategy 4: New faculty hires in sustainability

Six sustainability-related Canadian Research Chairs have been hired in the 2022-23 academic year.

Strategy 5: Internal funding for new sustainability related research projects

Concordia has several internal funding programs for new sustainability related research projects. They include the Sustainable Transitions Team Research Initiative program (OVPRGS), Sustainability Living Lab Funding Program (Sustainability Action Plan & SAF), Sustainability Research Awards Program (SAF) and Capstone SDG Impact Award (Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science).

Strategy 6: Provide grant application support for interdisciplinary sustainability researchers

In 2022-23, approximately 144 sustainability research projects were funded. All research grant applications/competitions receive the support of the Office of Research via ConRAD.

Enhance Research Impact

Target: Promote and enhance Concordia research to enrich local, Canadian, and International communities

Strategy 7: Recognize community partnerships as eligible for internal Team Start-up and Accelerator funding offered through the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

Community partnerships are eligible for internal Team Start-up and Accelerator funding through the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.

Strategy 8: Create a dynamic online system for cataloguing sustainability research and partnerships at Concordia. The system would make it possible to search, categorize, visualize, and obtain metadata about sustainability research at Concordia, while also serving as a conduit between aligned researchers and external communities

Recent updates have been made to the Next-Gen Explore Concordia system. With IITS, we created structured tables for managing and integrating faculty researcher-related data. These include:

- 16-digit ORCID numbers
- URLs for individual pages within the 20+ web platforms frequently used for representing research outputs and impacts (e.g. Concordia faculty profile, ORCID record, Google Scholar, YouTube, dblp, academia.edu, LinkedIn, etc.)

- 0-3 SDG alignments per person
- Individual membership and/or leadership roles in established research organizational entities (institutes, centres, units, labs, networks, consortia, partnerships, etc.)

These tables are not yet fully populated or connected to the Explore Concordia front end or internal admin interfaces.

Strategy 9: Connect Concordia sustainability research expertise with pre-university institutions

The Coordinator of Sustainability in Research (CSR) is working on a project to coordinate and support connections between sustainability researchers and CEGEP's. Still in its preliminary stage, the CSR has mapped out 4 different avenues of engagement for building said connections, and promoting sustainability in research in general:

- Collaborating with recruitment services where relevant to ensure sustainability is highlighted among current recruitment efforts
- Building relationships with CEGEP professors to facilitate the opportunity and offer of Concordia sustainability researchers giving a guest lecture on a sustainability research related topic
- Creating short 5-minute "Sustainability in Research" videos showcasing Concordia sustainability researchers and their work
- Identifying opportunities for sustainability in research advocacy within CEGEP student life

Strategy 10: Connect research expertise to develop sustainable practices and curriculum within the University (Curriculum Strategy 4)

A project to develop best sustainable research practice guidelines for different research activities and contexts is underway. The research context of the lab has been identified as the starting point for the guide, with the Faculty of Arts & Science identified for collaboration.

Strategy 11: Begin a campus-wide discussion about the recognition of alternative metrics of research impact for hiring and promotion that align with community partnerships

The discussion about the recognition of alternative metrics will be part of the Research Impact Pathways project. The Pathways Project is a framework for a shared institutional vision of research impact that supports multiple pathways to impact by leveraging existing and enhanced resources and expertise through cross-unit collaboration and cooperation.

Strategy 12: Support student and faculty researchers in knowledge mobilization of sustainability research, including training on best practices for communicating research findings and assistance for preparing their research for conferences and events

The support for knowledge mobilization of sustainability research will be built into the services and support offered by the Research Impact Pathways project.

Strategy 13: Provide support for conferences and events that increase the visibility of sustainability research at Concordia

- Total funding for Aid to Research Related Events (ARRE) provided in 2022-23: \$181,431
- Total number of events that benefitted: 42
- Total number of sustainability related events that benefitted: 18

Establish and promote sustainable research practices

Target: Monitor and reduce the ecological footprint of research, dissemination, and related activities conducted on and off campus

Strategy 14: Create an equipment-sharing platform that provides users with access to shared and/or affordable research and lab equipment internal to Concordia (Waste strategies 4, 13)

A project to produce guidelines detailing best sustainable research practices at Concordia is currently underway, spearheaded by the OVRGS. A collaboration with ASFA to develop guidelines surrounding the research practices of lab work has been initialized and is set to begin in January 2024, wrapping up by May 2024.

Strategy 15: Develop a protocol for encouraging carbon neutral research practices and travel (Climate Strategies 5, 11, 18)

The Office of Sustainability is coordinating a Fly Less campaign inspired by the policy that was created by the Department of Geography, Planning & Environment. Two workshops on the topic were given in 2022-23 and were targeted to university faculty and staff.

Strategy 16: Encourage projects designed to increase the sustainability of research at Concordia

In development, research institutes have to do an annual and mid-term report that includes sustainability and equity, diversity and inclusion as an area of impact.

Strategy 17: Encourage Concordia Sustainable Events certification program for all Concordia research events on campus (Food Strategy 3) (Waste Strategy 12)

In 2022-23, the Office of Sustainability launched a [Sustainable Event Certification program](#). The program is intended to help all Concordians host more socially and environmentally sustainable events. Many Concordia research events have availed of the program. Work is underway to incorporate the Sustainability Event Guide into the ARRE application criteria.