



SCHOOL OF HEALTH **REPORT**

MAY 1, 2024 - AUGUST 31, 2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN



It is with humility and pride that I present our first **School of Health Report**, covering May 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025. As the inaugural and Interim Dean since August 2023, I hope that this document captures both our early accomplishments and the promises ahead.

Our School was launched at a moment when universities in Quebec, including ours, face significant challenges. Despite this context, we are committed to the **vision** of building a **highly connected, inclusive, visible, and sustainable health ecosystem** at Concordia, known for its **agility, innovation, relevance, and impact**.

The School of Health was created to **provide an official home for health at Concordia, and to leverage, enhance, and build on Concordia's capacity in health research, education, and community engagement**. After two years of focused work, during which the newly established decanal team laid the School's foundations, we now have a governance structure in place, a [School of Health membership](#) of over 200 Concordia faculty members and students, strategic partnerships with key internal and external health actors, and a growing network of close to 12,000 community members who take part in our research projects and [public programs](#).

Since its creation, the School of Health has also been mandated with the administration of the **PERFORM Centre**. After much effort to improve the cost-effectiveness of PERFORM's operations, we were thrilled to close the last fiscal year with record-reaching revenues for both the PERFORM Gym and the Athletic Therapy Clinic, surpassing all previous years since the Centre's opening in 2011. This success came while maintaining excellence in student training and client care. **As we continue to bring PERFORM Centre towards financial sustainability, we help Concordia face its current budget challenge and position the School of Health for what lies ahead, namely new strategic research directions and academic programs.**

Thank you to the faculty, staff, students, and partners who have supported us every step of the way. Together, we are not only launching a School of Health—we are nurturing a hub where teaching, learning, innovation, and knowledge transfer converge to benefit Concordia and broader community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Véronique Pepin". The script is fluid and cursive.

Véronique Pepin
Interim Dean, School of Health

HIGHLIGHTS

School of Health Membership:

- **100 researcher** and **101 students** joined since December 2024.

Annual School of Health Conference:

- **200+** registrants, **70 student posters**, **10 poster prizes in 2024**.
- **210+** registrants, **89 student posters**, **12 poster prizes in 2025**.

Research Training and Internships:

- **99 research and internship students trained** in PERFORM platforms.

School of Health Student Awards:

- **31 graduate student awards** granted in 2025.

School of Health Research Grants:

- **3 grants** awarded in 2025 to support innovative interdisciplinary projects.

Record revenues from PERFORM Gym and Athletic Therapy Clinic in 2024 and 2025.

MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

We formally launched the [School of Health membership](#) in December 2024, welcoming some 200 researcher and student members as the true kickoff to the School—providing access to resources, networks, and collaboration opportunities. The nature and scope of the research, training and teaching of our members is diverse and vast, representing the three foundational hubs of the School: **Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Research**, **Clinical Research and Prevention**, and **Community Health Research**. Our membership serves as a catalyst to align Concordia's health stakeholders under an official home on campus.

Our recently formed **School of Health Council** (September 2025) will unite representatives from the four Faculties, three research centre directors, student representatives, a post-doctoral fellow and ex-officio leaders who will play a pivotal role in leading and shaping the directions of the School in its formative years. Additionally, our newly formed committees – the **School of Health Academic Programs Committee (SAPC)** and the **School of Health Research Committee (SRC)** – have been given clear mandates to develop and advance their respective portfolios.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Alisa Piekny

Associate Dean Research and Infrastructure



The School of Health has worked diligently to create a vibrant and collaborative research environment. Significant effort has been dedicated to developing and offering opportunities to bring together researchers, students, and academics to share knowledge, foster innovation, and build a community of inquiry in health. These initiatives have not only showcased the breadth of health research at Concordia but also created meaningful opportunities for emerging scholars to engage with leading experts.



Poster Presentations - 2024 SOH Annual Conference

Highlights from this period showcase the School of Health's growing leadership in research and community engagement. In 2024 and 2025, we hosted two dynamic research conferences that drew hundreds of attendees. These events featured renowned keynote speakers, faculty and trainee presentations, and over 150 student posters

representing diverse departments, faculties, and disciplines. Thanks to generous external donations, 22 students at various stages of training were recognized with poster prizes for their exceptional contributions to their fields.

The School also co-hosted several high-profile events that elevated Concordia's visibility in the health research landscape. Notably, the **Canada Gairdner Award Laureates Symposium** brought together over 200 attendees from Concordia, McGill, and Université de Montréal at Oscar Peterson Hall to hear from distinguished laureates. In collaboration with the Canadian Medical Association, we organized a **Debate Watch Party** to spotlight the urgent need for investment in healthcare and health research across Canada.

Further advancing our commitment to inclusive and interdisciplinary dialogue, the School co-hosted the **International Weight Bias Summit** with Dr. Angela Alberga, who convened a series of colloquia on topics ranging from digital health interventions to neurodivergence. We also welcomed the new **Vice President of Research, Impact and Innovation, Dr. Tim Evans**, for a

special lecture exploring the transformative opportunities presented by the new School of Health at Concordia.

One of the School of Health's key priorities is to shape strategic research directions in the health domain. To support this goal, we recently established the **School of Health Research Committee (SRC)**, comprising representatives from each Hub. As part of our commitment to fostering research excellence, the School launched its inaugural **call for proposals**, inviting submissions from newly affiliated members. The response was enthusiastic, with 14 applications received.

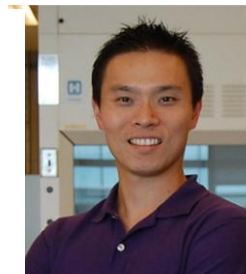
Funding was awarded to three groundbreaking projects in therapeutic innovation and bioengineering, led by Dr. Shih (Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering), Dr. Darlington (Faculty of Arts and Science, Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology), and Dr. Brett (Faculty of Arts and Science, Biology). These projects exemplify the School's dedication to advancing interdisciplinary research that delivers meaningful, real-world impact.



Dr. Christopher L. Brett



Dr. Peter J. Darlington



Dr. Steve C. C. Shih

A key objective of the School of Health is to enhance the visibility of health research at Concordia. To support this goal, we launched the **Concordia School of Health News Bulletin** to showcase compelling stories about research activities and achievements, while also sharing upcoming events and funding opportunities.

We have also begun producing **short, accessible videos** featuring School of Health members, where they explain their research programs in engaging and easy-to-understand ways. These *Meet the Researchers* videos are being shared across social media platforms to reach a broader audience and foster public engagement.

Finally, we are in the process of **redesigning the School's website** to improve accessibility and usability for both the Concordia community and the general public, ensuring that health research and initiatives at Concordia are more visible.

FACILITIES AND REVENUE GENERATION

PERFORM Centre

The School of Health plays a pivotal role in overseeing the PERFORM Centre, guiding its operations, staffing, and strategic directions across all platforms. The School conducted a thorough review of the Centre’s infrastructure to ensure it remains optimally equipped to support cutting-edge research, education, and training well into the future.

As part of this initiative, the School supported successful NSERC RTI applications led by Dr. Santosa (Faculty of Arts and Science, Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology) and Dr. Grova (Faculty of Arts and Science, Physics), resulting in new infrastructure for the Clinical Analysis and Physiology Suites. Additional external funding was also secured to replace aging equipment, further enhancing the Centre’s capabilities. This strategic investment reinforces PERFORM’s position as a state-of-the-art facility where academic excellence meets community impact.

Building on this foundation, the School expanded its fee-for-service offerings through the PERFORM Gym, Athletic Therapy Clinic, and Nutrition Suite, ensuring that these units continue to serve as vital spaces for both public engagement and experiential learning. In doing so, the PERFORM Gym and Athletic Therapy Clinic achieved record revenues—the highest since the Centre’s inception in 2011—while maintaining rigorous training standards for interns in kinesiology and athletic therapy. Notably, we anticipate the PERFORM Gym to generate a net profit for the very first time in 2025-2026.



Together, these efforts highlight the PERFORM Centre’s value as a strategic hub where experiential learning, community engagement, and financial sustainability come together to advance the School’s mission to support research and training in diverse sectors beyond PERFORM.

EDUCATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Alexandre Champagne

Associate Dean Academic Programs and Student Services



While our existing Faculties and research centres have been able to deliver wonderful progress on multidisciplinary health teaching and research, *there remains a dire need, and timely opportunity, for the School of Health to expand transdisciplinary health teaching and training.* In health studies, transdisciplinarity is essential to achieve holistic professional practices, efficient knowledge transfer, and enhanced impact on the field. The School is actively building the foundation of an academic space and programs which integrates the skills and knowledge of faculty members and staff from our four academic Faculties (we are working for them and with them).

Our roadmap to deliver tangible and short term results contains three ingredients: (i) connect health students and researchers across the University, via stimulating and productive communications/events; (ii) create the formal curriculum approval and management processes, while simultaneously building productive programming relationships with the four Faculties; (iii) design and create transdisciplinary courses and programs fusing strengths in health from Concordia's four Faculties: to add a new stream of student recruitment and research impact (generate growth for all Faculties). Below, we highlight some key steps taken over the past year on these three fronts.

- (i) From Fall 2024 to Winter 2025, 101 graduate students and postdocs active in health research at Concordia signed up to be members of the School. These trainees, and our entire community, receives regular newsletters and invitations to our scientific events. Our 2024 and 2025 annual conferences gathered 70 and 90 posters presentations by graduate students, respectively. In 2024-2025, we welcomed 99 research and internship interns (mainly in athletic therapy and kinesiology) at PERFORM. In the spring of 2025, we partnered with 14 of Concordia's Institutional Research Centres active in health to select the winners of our 31 SOH graduate student awards.



Poster Presentation Awards 2025 SOH Annual Conference

- (ii) In September 2025, we finalized the creation of the formal SOH Academic Programs Committee (SAPC). The committee will meet in Fall 2025 to discuss, review, and process the first academic proposals of the School for forwarding to our Council. Over 2024-2025, we consulted, discussed, and worked with faculty members, staff, associate deans from all four Faculties, School of Graduate Studies, and the Provost office. By now, we have established a workflow with most partners and engaged in collaborations that will make possible the timely development of complex program proposals.
- (iii) In Spring 2025, we submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) for our first PhD program: “Biomedical and Biological Sciences and Engineering”. This followed a very extensive and productive consultation across the Faculty of Arts and Science, Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science and School of Graduate Studies. We are actively working with the Provost office to move to the next step. In Fall 2025, a series of “slot” courses will be created to jump-start the creation and testing of new courses by the School.

In summary, *the two central administrative ideas of our programming are:* (i) create courses/programs that can only operate and blossom fully in the School (no competition with our four partner Faculties), (ii) create mid-size to large programs that will demonstrably attract new students to Concordia.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Community engagement is a keystone of the School of Health’s mission, creating opportunities for knowledge transfer, reciprocal learning, and real-world impact. By building strong partnerships with both internal and external organizations and units, the School ensures that its work benefits not only researchers and students, but also the wider community. These collaborations provide students and faculty with opportunities to apply their expertise in meaningful, hands-on ways, while enabling community members to access evidence-based programs that support healthier living.



Health Eating Cooking Workshops for Students

Internally, we have formalized a partnership with Recreation and Athletics to support the health and well-being of varsity and club athletes through service offerings in both the PERFORM Gym and Athletic Therapy Clinic. We have also collaborated with CU Wellness and Health Services on healthy eating workshops and cooking classes for students, the HIVE Café to promote healthy eating, and on-campus research initiatives—including studies on sleep and nutrition—to extend the School’s reach across Concordia. Planned outreach through residences and varsity athletics will further strengthen these connections. Externally, this year the School has fostered and nurtured relationships with partners and organizations

such as the Monkland Community Centre, the Eva Marsden Centre, the MUHC Breast Cancer Centre (through *Pink in the City*), and a local youth ringette team, among others. Additionally we were significantly involved with Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Ouest-de-l’Île-de-Montréal (CIUSSS-CCO) and l’Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ).

In June 2024, the School received its first major donation, a \$5-million legacy gift from Alumna, volunteer and major donor, Christine Lengvari, BSc 72, to support

nutrition and wellness research. Through these efforts, the School delivers knowledge and specialized healthy living programs—including physical activity services, nutrition counselling, and assessment and treatment of various musculoskeletal issues—that bring research to life. For students and researchers, this programming offers invaluable knowledge translation opportunities, bridging academic discovery with practical application. For community members, it provides accessible, evidence-based resources that support health, well-being, and resilience. This dual impact underscores the School’s role as both a hub for innovation and a partner in promoting healthier communities.



Paul Chesser, vice-president, University Advancement; Christine Lengvari, BSc 72; President Graham Carr; Véronique Pepin, interim dean, School of Health; Sylvia Santosa, Canada Research Chair Tier II, Clinical Nutrition

LOOKING AHEAD 2025–2026

Our strategic priorities are focused on building a School of Health that is inclusive, dynamic, visible, and sustainable, while advancing excellence across education, research, and community engagement.

Key priorities for 2025-2026 include:

- Implement the School's full governance model (Council, Research Committee, Curriculum Committee, and External Advisory Board) and foster decision-making that is inclusive, transparent, and that leverages expertise across Concordia's faculties and Research Centres.
- Establish the School's strategic research directions and continue to improve support for health researchers.
- Increase member engagement through partnerships with key Research Centres and continue to enhance the School's visibility with strategic events, news bulletin, strong social media presence, and optimized website.
- Obtain School of Health Council and University Senate approval for the School's first PhD program in Biomedical Sciences and Engineering (proposal, consultations, submission process).
- Position the School as a proactive and sought after collaborator for departments, research centres, and programs regarding health course scheduling (especially advanced and transdisciplinary courses). Two examples of SOH courses: Introduction to public health, and Health entrepreneurship.
- Draft outlines for two potential "fast-track" new program(s): one undergraduate minor/certificate and a graduate micro-program. Explore "high potential, low cost" suggestions to see if/where there is traction internally and externally.
- Maintain and renew student engagement via student awards, special events, and the annual School of Health conference.
- Increase the sustainability of the PERFORM Centre by further growing revenues and improving the cost-efficiency of platforms and by fully leveraging the infrastructure and surrounding expertise (consultation with faculty and alumni, partnerships with Recreation & Athletics, Campus Wellness & Support Services, etc.).

CLOSING REMARKS

In just two years, the School of Health has built a resilient, high-impact foundation by aligning research excellence, innovative teaching, modern infrastructure, and strategic partnerships. Our members and health researchers at Concordia have been central to this progress, contributing pioneering scholarships, translational projects, community-engaged programs, and interdisciplinary training that together raise the School's profile. The 2025–2026 strategic priorities will consolidate these gains, accelerate interdisciplinary collaboration across departments and centres, amplify the School's internal and external visibility, and unlock new streams of funding and trainee opportunities that advance the university's mission.

We will work in close partnership with the School of Health Council, the SOH Academic Programs Committee, the SOH Research Committee and Concordia's broader community of faculty, staff, and health researchers to translate strategy into measurable outcomes. Together we will set clear milestones for research capacity, student success, community engagement, and knowledge mobilization, positioning the School for sustainable growth, greater societal impact, and enduring contributions to health systems and population well-being.

