



ENGAGE, PREPARE AND
CONNECT

CONCORDIA

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 2018





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**Paula Wood-Adams,
Dean of Graduate Studies**

The **School of Graduate Studies (SGS)** is committed to ensuring that graduate students at Concordia enter stimulating academic programs and superior research facilities to work with engaged and dedicated teachers and supervisors.

We strive to provide the necessary academic and professional skills to contribute to society in a positive and rewarding manner upon graduation.

Students, postdoctoral fellows, supervisors and Faculties can depend on the professional and academic staff at the School for advisory and regulatory guidance in their navigation of the development, administration and delivery of our graduate degree programs and postdoctoral appointments.

A recognized pillar in the Research sector, the School collaborates with Faculties and services to promote a positive and rewarding student experience.

In 2016, as part of the Strategic Directions plan, we developed a five-year plan entitled **Engage, Prepare and Connect**. We update our plan every year to make sure that we stay on track, while being adaptive to changing circumstances and nimble enough to explore new opportunities and sometimes shifting priorities.

In 2016, we identified three big goals that continue to help us all align our activities every year.

CULTIVATE A GRADUATE STUDENT-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT

PREPARE AND TRAIN NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS

REACH BEYOND OUR WALLS

Please have a look at some of the highlights we experienced at the School of Graduate Studies this past year.

Paula Wood-Adams
Dean of Graduate Studies
Concordia University

CULTIVATING A GRADUATE STUDENT-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

Graduate student success is holistic in nature and a core mission of our institution. SGS understands that graduate studies comprise not only of what students learn within the academic program, but also their overall experience, including research and professional development.

Last year, we worked closely with Departments and Faculties to develop academic and non-academic programs, as well as opportunities to enhance the graduate student experience at Concordia.

SHINE A LIGHT ON HIGH-PROFILE AWARD RECIPIENTS

As a way to share and take pride in our high-achieving graduate students, we regularly feature them in our communications with the Concordia community, whether it be through NOW stories, an enhanced web presence or social media. Here are a few examples from this past year.

Amir Hooshlar, a third-year PhD candidate in the Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering, and a Concordia Public Scholar, won the NSERC Gilles Brassard Doctoral Prize for Interdisciplinary Research. The \$10,000 award recognizes an outstanding recipient of a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship who best exemplifies interdisciplinary research. Amir is the first Concordian to receive it.

Anne –Marie Turcotte, a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, received a Vanier Scholarship (SSHRC) for her project on Nunavimmiut youth. For the course of her research, she'll be collaborating with young people in Nunavik who experience difficulties in creating a sense of self in northern villages. A maximum of 167 Vanier scholarships are distributed annually among the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and engineering, and health. Each award is valued at \$50,000 a year for three years.



Amir Hooshlar, PhD Candidate in Mechanical Engineering, Vanier Scholar and Concordia Public Scholar

Darian Stahl is Concordia's third PhD student to have received a Vanier Scholarship this year. Completing a degree in the Humanities Interdisciplinary program, she works at the intersections of art and medicine to illuminate the inequities of individuals living with chronic illness. Darian Stahl also represented Concordia at the national Three-Minute Thesis and Project competition (3MT), an annual event that challenges graduate students to present their research in easy-to-understand terms to a non-specialist audience.

Younes Medkour, a PhD candidate in the Department of Biology and a Concordia Public Scholar, was a finalist for NSERC's Science, Action! video competition. From the long list of 25, a panel of judges chose 15 finalists to feature as part of museum exhibits and science fairs, as well as during Science Odyssey and Science Literacy Week. Students also received cash prizes for their efforts. Younes' video, "The Fountain of Youth," featured his research on aging, including his quest to increase the human lifespan and delay the onset of age-related diseases.

Postdoctoral researcher **Ehsan Rezabeigi** (PhD 15) was one of 20 finalists for La preuve par l'image 2017, run by l'Association francophone pour le savoir (Acfas). Ehsan captured an image of a microbead using a scanning electron microscope. All the nominated pictures were on display at Montreal's Biodôme until the end of December 2017.

SUPPORT SUPERVISORS TO EXCEL IN THEIR ROLE

In April, we hosted Supervision at its Best, a half-day of activities aimed at promoting excellence in graduate supervision. Our speakers and animators included Ann English, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry and Concordia's recipient of the 2017-18 Award for Graduate Mentoring, Amy Fish, Concordia University Ombudsperson, and Anthony Paré, author of, among others, *Re-thinking the dissertation and doctoral supervision*.

PARTNER WITH THE COMMUNITY

Through new initiatives and partnerships, we worked to build ties with the community at large.

SAUVÉ FOUNDATION

The Jeanne Sauvé Public Leadership Program provides "lifelong personal and professional development to emerging global community public leaders." As a Sauvé academic partner, Concordia hosted a meet-and-greet for the 2017-2019 Sauvé Fellows. On August 25, Paula Wood-Adams, Dean of Graduate Studies, welcomed the 12 Fellows to campus. Following their campus tour, the Fellows participated in a private orientation on all of our student services, including our Libraries and GradProSkills.

CONCORDIA PUBLIC SCHOLARS

Members of the Concordia community and the public joined our first cohort of Public Scholars on March 20 for an evening of short talks. The event, hosted by Lucinda Chodan, Editor-in-Chief of the Montreal Gazette and vice-president of content for the eastern region of Postmedia, provided thought-provoking reflection, investigation and discovery.

These next-generation researchers each had five minutes to tell the public how their work affects our future. The event was part of Concordia's *Thinking Out Loud* lecture series, presented in partnership with the *Montreal Gazette*. More than 100 guests attended.

Ehsan Rezabeigi photo entry for ACFAS' 'La preuve par l'image'





Concordia's first Public Scholars cohort

DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND IDEAS THAT CHALLENGE AND REWARD OUR STUDENTS

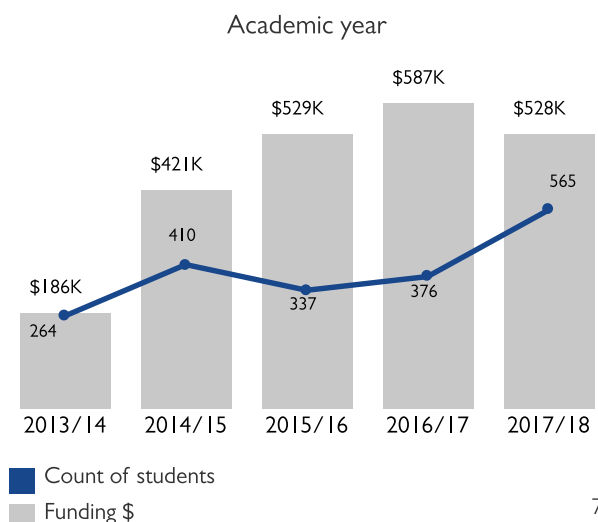
Here are some of the projects in which we were involved:

- We advised on several new programs in development: Master's in Dance Therapy; Fine Arts Summer Certificates; Graduate Certificate in Museum Education; Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Business Studies; Master's in Performance Creation.
- We advised on several major curriculum revisions: PhD in Administration; PhD in Art History; Master's programs in the John Molson School of Business; Master's in Cinematic Arts; Master's in Supply Chain Management.
- We worked with the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) and the Quebec Ministry of Education on several new programs: Master's in Youth Work; PhD in Health and Exercise Science; Master's in Nanotechnology/Nanoscience; and Master's and PhD in Chemical Engineering.
- We completed an analysis of our GPS Professional Writing Skills workshop in order to make it as useful as possible to our graduate students.

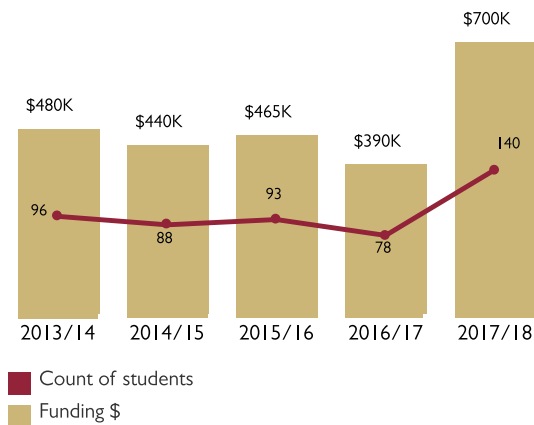
PROVIDE UNIQUE FUNDING PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS

We provided Concordia-based funding programs to build networks, encourage research dissemination, and help students focus on their dissertation and defence:

Conference awards provide funding for students to present at major scholarly conferences, or artistic exhibitions in a peer-reviewed or juried context. These opportunities encourage students to disseminate their research, acquire professional and practical experience, and enhance Concordia's profile in the external research community.



Accelerator awards assist highly qualified full-time PhD students complete their dissertation writing and defence. The \$5,000 prize provides students with financial support, an incentive to graduate on time and help integrating into the workforce sooner rather than later.



The **Graduate Community Building Fund** aims is to build an intellectual community within graduate programs by bringing together students and faculty for events, lectures, symposia, or other related activities. Twenty-three projects and events received up to \$5,000 in funding, including:

- Education with Impact: Transcending Traditional Curricula
- Electrical and Computer Engineering Graduate Student Research Conference
- First Concordia-McGill African Studies Conference
- Mechanical Industrial & Aerospace Engineering Department Graduate Student Event Series
- Religion and Violence: History, Sources, and the Contemporary World

PREPARING AND TRAINING NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS

Whether they choose academia or non-academic careers, our next-generation leaders require knowledge and skills beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries.

SGS, via GradProSkills, collaborates with internal and external content experts, such as the Student Success Centre and University Communications Services, to ensure students and postdoctoral fellows are equipped with the necessary tools to contribute in substantial ways to the worlds in which they work.

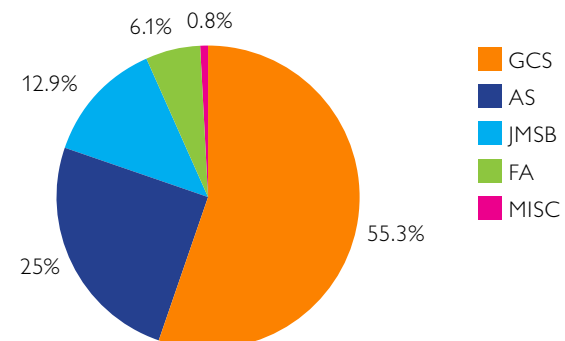
KEEP GRADPROSKILLS CURRENT AND RELEVANT

The popularity of GradProSkills' offerings is a testament to the need for the program. However, popularity alone is not a measure of quality or relevance.

Over the past year, we offered 356 workshops in eight domains with 6,230 registrations and more than 2,100 unique students. We continually revise our program offerings, act on feedback from our partners and students, and look to the external community for future directions.

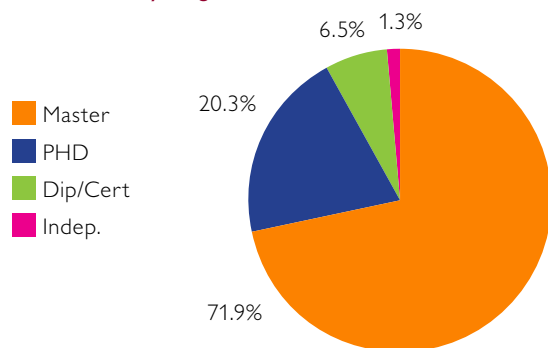
GRADPROSKILLS (GPS) BY THE NUMBERS

Enrolment by faculty





Enrolment by Degree



**91% of GPS students are
LIKELY TO RECOMMEND a
workshop to a colleague**

GRAD SCHOOL BASE CAMP

On September 1 and 21, GradProSkills held its annual Grad School Base Camp for new graduate students. The event is a condensed version of six GradProSkills workshops that cover fundamental topics aimed at preparing students for a successful start to graduate school. The room was full to capacity on both occasions, with 110 students in attendance.

Students actively participated in the *Library Skills and Resources*, *Effective Reading Strategies*, *Embracing Diversity*, *Time Management*, *Know the Code* and *Stress Management* workshops. They expressed their appreciation for the event, noting that it provided them with information to adapt and succeed in their graduate studies. The day also gave them the opportunity to meet students from other disciplines and become an integral part of the Concordia community.

THESIS BOOST: A THREE-DAY WRITING RETREAT

GradProSkills offered *Thesis Boost: a three-day writing retreat*, in partnership with the Libraries, Student Success Centre, Health Services and Le Gym. Guylaine Beaudry, Vice-Provost of Digital Strategies and University Librarian, kicked-off the event by sharing her own writing experience.

In total, 60 Master's and PhD students from all disciplines, as well as a few from McGill University, attended the *Thesis Boost*. Students made progress on their theses and benefitted from a number of workshops that featured librarians and writing assistants giving individualized support.

3-MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION (3MT)

On March 15, 77 students took part in orientation sessions on the 3MT and 63 participated in 22 coaching sessions. Specialized guest coaches worked with students on different parts of their presentations, including self-confidence, storytelling, stage presence and pronunciation. The coaching sessions emphasized giving participants the opportunity to boost their presentation skills and self-assurance, as well as to collaborate with their peers.

The event was broadcasted on Facebook Live, and family and friends were invited to watch from overseas (we even had live viewers from Nigeria!). Our winners were Milan Valyear and Eric Fillion, who proudly represented Concordia in the Eastern Regional Competition at McGill University on April 18 and at the ACFAS conference on May 9.

INVEST IN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

Through our Horizon Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, we are investing \$2 million per year to attract top recent PhD graduates from around the world to our institution.

The **Horizon Fellows Program** is a key component of the Double our Research strategic direction and brings a fresh cohort of exceptional researchers who challenge our faculty, mentor the next generation of researchers, and boost our research and creative productivity.



REACHING BEYOND OUR WALLS

Our students represent more than 100 countries, each with its own educational system and culture. To realize the potential of Concordia's international appeal, we continually develop recruitment strategies that recognize the diversity of our targeted populations.

We offer clear pathways to graduate degrees that make us an attractive first choice for top students from the rest of Canada and around the world. We also work with the Office of Student Recruitment to develop communication strategies that attract excellent prospects, and we collaborate with Advancement and Alumni Relations to cultivate lasting and productive relationships with our graduates from across the globe.

OUR TEAM, LEADERS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Paula Wood-Adams, Dean of Graduate Studies, began a two-year term as President of l'Association des doyens des études supérieures au Québec (ADESAQ), a group comprised of all the deans of graduate studies in the province. The group lobbies the government, collaborates with similar groups across Canada, releases policy papers and establishes working groups on topics of interest to the graduate community.

Brad Nelson, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Development, completed a one-year term as President of the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools (NAGS), a North American association of graduate institutions that delivers workshops and conferences, and explores best practices in the graduate landscape. As president, Nelson

hosted the 2018 conference in Montreal, where he delivered a keynote address on disseminating research in an era of echo chambers. As ex-President of NAGS, he is an affiliate member of the Executive Committee for the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), the parent organization of NAGS. At the CGS summer workshop in Chicago, Nelson led a dean's dialogue on international admissions.

Frédérica Martin, Manager of Academic Programs and Development, was invited to present the findings of the PhD Career Self-Management project at the ACFAS Colloquium "Compétences des titulaires d'un doctorat : quelles perceptions hors milieu universitaire?"



Reem Ayouby, PhD candidate in Supply Chain & Business Technology Management, presenting at the 3MT competition

WE DRAW ON EXPERTISE FROM COLLEAGUES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

In an April workshop, **Julie Posselt**, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Southern California, shared her insights on admissions and recruitment from the decision maker's point of view.

She included thought-provoking reporting on committee debates and applicant interviews, as well as how to grapple with borderline cases. Posselt is also the author of *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping* (Harvard University Press, 2016), a Choice Outstanding Academic Title of the Year.

WE MEET OUR FUTURE STUDENTS LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

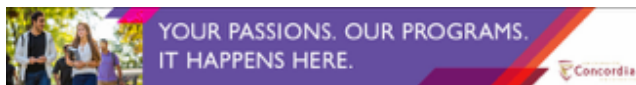
Our recruitment team travels the world to find the best graduate students and promote Concordia as a first-choice university. As part of our recruitment efforts:

- We attended 23 graduate fairs and hosted presentations in multiple countries such as Brazil, China, Colombia, Mexico, France, India and Italy, as well as the cities of New York, San Francisco and Washington D.C. These efforts generated 1,788 leads.
- In Istanbul, we organized a graduate recruitment event at a downtown hotel (new international initiative). The Trade Commissioner in Istanbul promoted the event via social media.
- In addition to the traditional QS fairs we attended, we added one-on-one meetings with students in three key cities (Delhi, Milan and London). These 30-minute prescheduled personal meetings offer a unique opportunity to sit face-to-face with students who match our profile.
- We organized meetings with dozens of applicants at Ottawa and Toronto hotels, where we answered their questions and helped them navigate through the next steps in the admissions process.
- Our top undergraduate students attended a wine and cheese reception in their honour. The event was a joint effort and representatives from all Faculties were on hand to answer questions and recruit our own very best students!
- We participated in the MITACS intern event to promote our graduate programs to some of the brightest international undergraduate students interested in research.

WE USE THE POWER OF THE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE WITH OUR COMMUNITY

- We helped the first cohort of Public Scholars share the relevance of their research to the community through the creation of a branded web presence, articles geared to the Concordia community, social media and blogging support, and the organization and promotion of a successful end-of-year event.
- We promoted success stories within our graduate population through NOW articles, website features and weekly newsletters.





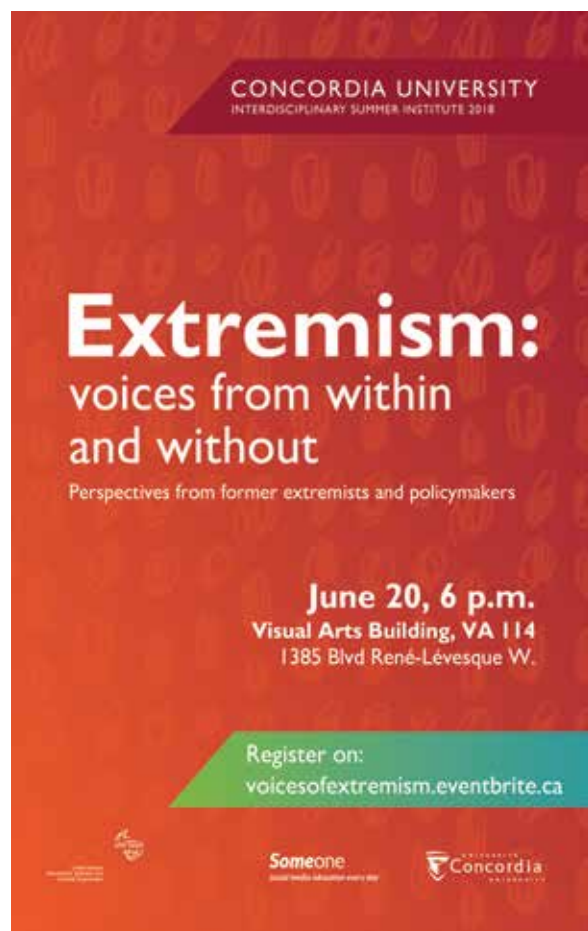
- Through our newsletter's weekly tips, awards news and workshop items, we serve our graduate population with content they care about.
- We revamped our main website to be more user friendly, and adopted an outside-in approach to content creation and to how to share it with our stakeholders.
- A social media recruitment campaign on Facebook and Google Ads generated more than 40,000 clicks to the Concordia website.
- We increased awareness through our social media presence and targeted Facebook and Adword campaigns. Our Twitter following saw a 138 per cent boost, while our Facebook page expanded its reach by 238 per cent.
- We increased our presence in the QS Top Universities through an advanced profile.
- Our year-long banner campaigns — and a special campaign surrounding rankings — generated more than 2,000 clicks to the graduate admissions website
- We launched a series of targeted e-blasts that included six different messages delivered to Europe, the U.S. and Canada and a retargeting campaign, as well as four e-blasts coordinated in conjunction with the Faculties.

WE CREATE A BUZZ WITH OUR SUMMER INSTITUTES

Seventeen students from across Concordia, Canada and New York State participated in our 2017 Summer Institute on *Sustainable Futures*.

The institute's format featured a week-long interdisciplinary course/seminar for Master's and PhD students that covered the fundamentals of sustainable futures literature. The institute assisted each student in constructing their own sustainability paths for society.

Led by faculty members from Concordia, Wilfrid Laurier University and the Balsillie School of International Affairs, students received academic credits, produced a publishable paper and made public presentations on the themes that most captured their research interests.





ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Throughout a student's journey, the foundational goal is academic excellence. We strive to be administratively efficient and responsive to students' needs. In the past year, we made numerous changes to regulations and processes, and introduced new initiatives to continually improve our graduate students' experience.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND NEW INITIATIVES

- Convened five meetings of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies and six sessions of the Graduate Curriculum Committee.
- Admitted 17 new doctoral and 9 new master's students to our [INDI](#) program, bringing our total [INDI](#) student population to 126 students who are creating their own academic programs; examples demonstrating the diversity of research topics include:
 - o *Child-Targeted Assimilation "Indian" Day School Education In Kahnawà:ke: An Ethnographic Case Study*
 - o *Traditional systems of meat gathering, production, and consumption*
 - o *The Efficacy of Drama Therapy in the Prevention or Delay of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia for At-Risk Individuals*
 - o *Seeking Immigrant's Children's Voice and Well-being using visual methods*
- Implemented a pilot project for thesis editing to help students with their drafts.
- Collaborated with Enrolment Services to develop an online reference form for graduate applicants.
- Introduced [data dashboards](#) highlighting recruitment and enrolment patterns, service request statistics, GradProSkills usage, and program times to completion.
- Standardized calendar text for academic regulations in each program section, revised text on fast-track admissions to make it a better option for excellent students, refined the deferral process and removed the \$25 fee, aligned the course-based Master's graduation assessment and graduation GPAs with practices from other Canadian institutions.
- Hosted three graduate program director lunches: New and Returning GPD Information Session, Recruitment Tools, and Best Practices in Supervision.
- Delivered eight workshops for graduate program assistants on topics ranging from graduate billing to academic standing.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We look forward to the 2018-19 academic year, with several projects planned to make the student experience even better, including reducing our times to completion at the Master's level, conducting an analysis of PhD career outcomes, providing supervisors with more tools, linking our GradProSkills offerings to specific disciplinary needs, and providing graduate program assistants with workshops and training to help them support our graduate students!



2017-18 IN NUMBERS

| Enrolment | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Total | 8018 | 8571 | 9040 |
| Master's | 5128 | 5439 | 5855 |
| PhD | 1430 | 1534 | 1621 |
| Graduate Certificate and Diploma | 938 | 1055 | 1028 |
| Other (non-degree) | 522 | 543 | 536 |

| Recruitment | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|--------------|
| Applications | 9034 | 10175 | 12482 |
| Acceptances | 5158 | 5703 | 6255 |
| New registrants | 2969 | 2889 | 3071 |

| Graduates | | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------------|
| Total | 1868 | 1844 | 1984 |
| Master's course based | 1054 | 1058 | 1160 |
| Master's thesis | 397 | 382 | 348 |



| Graduates (cont'd) | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|------|-------------|
| PhD | 145 | 174 | 133 |
| Graduate Certificate and Diploma | 272 | 230 | 343 |
| GradProSkills | | | |
| Enrolment | 5088 | 6111 | 6247 |
| Unique students | 1786 | 1876 | 2127 |
| Awards | | | |
| SSHRC award holders | 92 | 121 | 185 |
| NSERC award holders | 18 | 15 | 29 |
| Service Requests | | | |
| Total requests | 4357 | 4712 | 4584 |

