

ENGAGE, PREPARE AND CONNECT

**SCHOOL OF
GRADUATE STUDIES**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/21

The School of Graduate Studies 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 will strive to financially support students throughout their degree program, and 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 will collaborate with Faculties and services over the next five years to commit to three broad areas of focus. We will:

- **Cultivate a graduate student-centred environment**
- **Prepare and train next-generation leaders**
- **Reach beyond our walls**

CULTIVATE A GRADUATE STUDENT-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT

Graduate student success is the core mission of our institution. Following the principles and values of the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey, SGS understands that the graduate student's experience is holistic in nature, comprising not only what is learned within the academic program but also their overall experience, including research and professional development. We will work closely with Departments and Faculties to develop academic and non-academic programs and opportunities to enhance the graduate student experience throughout their life at Concordia. We will cultivate a student-centred environment by:

- Aligning new program creation with research strengths and institutes
- Creating new programs that cross disciplinary boundaries
- Optimizing the use of the INDI program as a means for students to pursue their own academic interests where no formal program exists
- Launching the new Guidelines for Graduate Supervision
- Growing the Community Building Fund, which fosters the development of an intellectual community within and across graduate programs encouraging graduate students to feel more connected to their programs, their professors and the university in general
- Developing lively and meaningful student-targeted communications practices by expanding the means for efficient, targeted and informative communications between all levels of the university and our graduate students. It allows for graduate students to take advantage of all opportunities for funding, training, and experiential learning.
- Increasing graduate student funding to ensure guaranteed funding packages for all doctoral students and to attract the most qualified masters students
- Rewarding excellence in graduate supervision with an annual Graduate Mentoring Award
- Providing thesis-editing services, in collaboration with the Student Success Centre





PREPARE AND TRAIN NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS

Our next generation leaders require knowledge and skills beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. SGS, via GradProSkills, will partner with the Student Success Centre, our University Communications Services and other content experts, both internal and external, to ensure that our students and postdoctoral fellows are equipped with the necessary tools to contribute in substantial ways to the worlds in which they work, whether they chose academia or non-academic careers. We will prepare and train next-generation leaders by:

- Launching the new evidence-based Leadership Series in GradProSkills which provides masters and doctoral students, as well as postdoctoral fellows, with leadership skills that employers expect of such highly educated professionals, preparing them to take on high-level positions outside of the academy upon graduation
- Developing and integrating extra-curricular training in areas particularly relevant to different academic disciplines
- Offering a new series of GradProSkills workshops in business administration basics in collaboration with JMSB
- Funding 25 new postdoctoral fellowships in strategic research areas through the newly instituted Concordia Postdoctoral Fellowships program
- Promoting the Certificate in University Teaching and capitalizing on its potential
- Developing a new series of evidence-based workshops for GradProSkills on Career Management for PhDs

REACH BEYOND OUR WALLS

Our students represent over 100 countries, each with its own educational system and culture. To realize the potential of Concordia's international appeal, we will develop recruitment strategies that recognize the diversity of our targeted populations and 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 work with the University Recruitment Office to develop communication strategies that attract top prospects, and we will partner with our Alumni office to cultivate lasting and productive relationships with our graduates the world over. We will reach beyond our walls by:

- Recruiting top Canadian and international students by reaching out to them at planned events, or via an increased and strategic use of social media and webinars
- Increasing our number of collaborative degrees, via co-tutelles, increased use of the China Scholarship Council opportunities, or other agreements
- Creating a Public Scholars program that prepares our best PhD students to play an active, leading role in our society, raises awareness of the impact of our PhD students' research and influences the opinion of potential employers as to the value of the PhD outside of the academy
- Incorporating a two-year professional membership allowance for students who receive a conference award
- Tracking our PhD alumni, reporting on their employment and achievements, and connecting them with each other, with our professors and with current PhD students in order to facilitate an exchange of knowledge about PhD education and career outcomes (**TRaCE**)

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic excellence is the foundation of our efforts in graduate education and professional development. In support of this fundamental principle we will:

- Launch ASIM (Academic Success and integrity Module) to ensure that all new students are well versed in the tenets of academic integrity, in collaboration with the University Library;
- Provide analytics to help guide programs with their enrolment planning, in collaboration with Institutional Planning;
- Develop and implement an awards allocation model benefitting programs that meet discipline specific performance criteria, and maintain an envelope to support new program development;
- Host informational gatherings for graduate program administrators on topics of special and current interest (mental health awareness, international credential evaluation, best practices in recruitment, SIS-related functionalities, for instance)
- Develop an assessment process to review our GradProSkills offerings, and refine them as necessary;
- Establish an Advisory Committee of leaders and employers from the public and private spheres to advise us on the development of new programming content for GradProSkills