Centre for Gender Advocacy Mapping Project

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Funded By

Contents

Introduction to the Centre for Gender Advocacy, Mapping Project

In 2016, The Mapping Project was awarded the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL), Big Hairy Ideas grant. Its aim was to provide Concordia University with a teaching and learning report that demonstrated the gaps in policy, pedagogy, and services that were impacting LGBTQ2S+ Students as well as Students with Disabilities. The original project proposal also included an in-depth content analysis of course syllabi to assess the representation of gender diversity and queer perspectives in the teaching materials. The original scope of the project proved to be too large which resulted in it being re-envisioned in 2018. The core focus became the identification of the areas within the classroom environment, pedagogy, and services that create barriers for LGBTQ2S+ students and/or Students with Disabilities. With the new scope, the project was revitalized by the current coordinators, research assistants, and advisory committee in the Fall of 2018. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, we had the opportunity to hear from over three hundred individuals in the Concordia community including students, professors, and service staff. This has given us an understanding of how the university can better support these students in the "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" (EDI) work that is currently being undertaken.

Although this is a Concordia specific initiative, we hope this work helps to inform other community-based initiatives in and outside of higher education. Each section emphasizes LGBTQ2S+ and Disabled students in surveys, focus groups, and interviews. A complimentary part of this report is our review of Concordia's current Student Accessibility policy, which you can access from the project webpage https://genderadvocacy.org/the-mapping-project/

First, a quick note concerning terminology. Throughout this report, we switch between different terminology, including person first and identity first disability language (e.g. a person with a disability / disabled person). More about this can be found in the aforementioned policy review. Furthermore, we use a variety of languages for different identities that fall under the LGBTQ2S+ umbrella, including Trans / Non-Binary / Gender-Diverse to describe groups of students who are not cisgender.

Acknowledgements & Thanks

This work took place in unceded Kanien'kehaká territory by people who are settlers to this land. We recognize the Kanien'kehaká as the custodians of Tiohtá:ke/Montreal where we have the privilege to conduct research and work on community-based projects such as this.

Firstly, we thank all the students who took the time and energy to share their experiences with us. This project was conceptualized by Gabrielle Bouchard and was first coordinated by Jess Glavina who we thank for their tremendous contribution. The Centre for Gender Advocacy is the home of this project and we greatly appreciate the support we have received from its staff and board, with special mention of Dalia Tourki, who assisted us in making the interview process more accessible to Trans Students of Colour, and to Hikaru Ikeda, who offered endless administrative support and Julie Michaud who promoted the project for us and helped us ensure it was well circulated. We are also immensely grateful to the Centre for Gender Advocacy board member Florencia Vallejo-Ortiz who edited and provided feedback on this report and McGill Masters of Social Work student Nathan Farley for his invaluable last minute assistance.

This undertaking would have been impossible without the support of our advisory team (mentioned above), and other collaborators who provided us guidance and feedback at different points, including Dr. Edward Ou Jin Lee (Associate Professor, Social Work, l'Université de Montréal), Dr. Natalie Kouri-Towe, (Assistant Professor, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University), Dr. Zack Marshall (Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, McGill University, and Meghan Gagliardi (Project Coordinator, C-FAR Concordia). As well as Andrew Woodall (Dean of Students), Alicia Cundell (Teaching Consultant, Centre for Teaching & Learning), Anna Barrafato (Interim Manager, Access Centre for Students with Disabilities), Gaya Arasaratnam (Director, Concordia Wellness & Support Services), and Matthew Fishman (Manager, Birks Student Service Centre) who we thank for their continued support, recruitment assistance and feedback.

Process

Our process was greatly guided by our community advisory committee, who have been with us since 2018. We met a total of 10 times in person, and their involvement also included email communications, remote consultation, and editing. Their tireless work reviewing surveys, ethics forms, and editing our reports is what got this project to completion.

This project was initiated and completed by a student-fee levy group that works outside of the university's administrative body and was mainly carried out by people who identify as Queer and/or Trans, and/or as a Person with a Disability. In our conversation with Dr. Edward Ou Jin Lee, it was made clear to us the uniqueness of this work and the need to outline our process so it could be replicated by other community organizations within higher education. We hope this will help future projects improve upon our methods, regardless of their level of experience in research.

Networking

Activity

Compiled a list of stakeholders at Concordia and we contacted each by email to inform of the project. This was also used for survey dissemination.

Prior to fully reinstating the project we had in-person meetings to request support for the project with the Dean of Students, Andrew Woodall; Special Advisor to the Provost on Campus Life, Lisa Ostiguy; Interim Manager, Accessibility Centre Students with Disabilities, Anna Barrafato; and Teaching Consultant, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Alicia Cundell.

Challenges

Finding stakeholders was particularly difficult as there was not yet a webpage for the EDI initiatives at Concordia that listed those involved.

Difficult to attain follow-up meetings with higher administration members that spearhead EDI work due to their busy schedules.

The mapping team was not invited to collaborate on any of the current EDI work being done.

The broadness of this project made it an interest to many stakeholders. However, it was difficult to make and maintain meaningful connections with individuals due to the extensiveness of the work and limited hours.

Designing data collection tools

Activity

We designed a total of 5 surveys in collaboration with our Advisory Committee.

Surveys were mixed methods, using both quantitative and qualitative questions.

Our student survey was extensive, with 32 questions and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Professor surveys ranged from having 28-29 questions, while the service survey had 11 questions, each took under 10 minutes to complete.

We also sought feedback from Anna Barrafato, and Teaching Consultant, Centre for Teaching & Learning, Alicia Cundell.

Challenges

Creating survey questions that would not deter recipients.

Finding ways to be inclusive when asking for demographic information but not *intrusive*.

> We opted for multiple-choice check-boxes so people could select a variety of different identities but in the end, had to eliminate many of these intersections because they would lead to people being identified.
>
> Checkboxes also did not capture all possible identities, highlighting what was left out. Open text boxes for gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation would have been more broad and resolved some of the issues. However, were not a solution to privacy issues we foresaw.

Obtaining Concordia ethics approval

Activity

Considering the intent to widely circulate the findings and that we were seeking feedback from professors and students, ethics was a necessary step that provided added assurances to our participants and helped maximize potential response.

The ethics documents were done in collaboration with our advisory team, who collectively had more experience seeking ethics approval through a University than our coordinators.

Challenges

Seeking ethics approval delayed the survey launch. The project timeline was originally nine months. However, the ethics process took upwards of 3 months, which was time we did not originally account for.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Activity

Focus groups and interviews were for LGBTQ2S+ and/or Disabled Students who were recruited through Facebook events, posters on campus, word of mouth, and networking through student services.

On average, the interviews lasted one hour and participants were compensated $65 for their time.

We also offered to have peer-support (a service offered by the CGA) present in case students felt the need to debrief after the interview process.

Challenges

Originally we had planned for focus groups of six participants. However, scheduling was challenging as we wanted to meet the different needs of each participant, so we converted some of the focus groups to one-on-one interviews.

We had to cancel several groups and due to holidays and time constraints, we could not reschedule.

Many students held multiple identities, such as trans and disabled, so some advertising for the project was confusing to them, as they weren't sure which focus group they should attend. This also meant that as groups were specific to one identity (e.g., for Trans students), often these students did not talk about their intersecting identities (e.g., their disability).

Recruitment

Activity

Our surveys went out at different times.

It was not possible for us to send out an email to all professors. Instead, we emailed all Deans and faculty chairs to invite them to forward the survey to their faculty.

Challenges

Despite the emails citing our ethics protocol number, some Chairs were skeptical of the project.

1 out of 3 faculty Deans did not reply, despite numerous emails

Despite over a dozen attempts, security never responded to requests to promote our service survey to campus security guards.

It was difficult to calculate a survey response rate without being copied on emails to professors which, in retrospect, we should have requested.

Analyzing data

Activity

One RA transcribed all of the interviews, a process that took approximately 6-8 hours per interview/focus group.

One RA & one Coordinator then thematically coded all transcripts separately. thematically coded all interviews and focus groups separately then reviewed the coding decisions.

The entire project team met and discussed the larger themes of all interviews and survey data together.

Survey data was analyzed by one Coordinator and both RAs.

Challenges

The main challenge was avoiding extensive interpretation of a student's experiences. We attempted to do so by avoiding attaching a feeling (i.e. disappointment) to a student's experience unless the student provided us with that detail.

We originally wanted the advisory committee, coordinators, and research assistants to code data together in order to align closely with the values of Community Based Research, but we were constricted by time and resources to do this fully.

Limitations

As we needed to protect the privacy of students, we used general categories of identity to group participants while attempting to still contextualize who is represented. To reduce threats to privacy we asked focus group participants and interviewees to tell us what parts of their identity they were comfortable with us sharing in this report when quoting them directly. However, this was not possible with survey participants. Due to this, the report uses general terms such as Trans Student of Colour or Disabled Student of Color, Neurodivergent Students, etc. when referring to students who did not want to be identified specifically, survey participants who provided these general identities (but may have also provided more specific ones), or those who did not provide full information.

As our survey & focus group participants were predominantly white students (see below), we worked to better highlight barriers brought forward by Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color (BIPOC) students who participated as well as illustrate the issues around racism/lack of representation that were extensively reported by many participants.

We (the Coordinators) propose that this lower representation, specifically of Indigenous students, could be due to several challenges:

1 Our lack of relationships with Indigenous Concordia students and the different communities made up within the University.

2 That this project is settler led.

3 Overall representation of Indigenous students within the University, especially those who are LGBTQ2S+ and/or Disabled but this is difficult for us to confirm.

4 Indigenous students are highly sought after for academic research by non-Indigenous researchers.

While this statement does not rectify this project's underrepresentation, we wish to highlight the importance of the University allocating appropriate funding to "by and for" projects that address the barriers Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ students and Students with Disabilities face within the institution.

Results

Student Survey & Interviews

We received 252 responses from current Concordia students on our Student Survey. The survey was open from October 2019 to February 2020. Despite the lengthy time frame, the majority of the responses were received in December 2019 and January 2020. As the survey was advertised that it was regarding LGBTQ2S+ and disability-related experiences, it mainly attracted students who identified as LGBTQ2S+ and/or having a disability.

Student Survey Demographic Data

Type of matriculation:

72% full time

19% part-time

Faculty of major:

61% Arts and Sciences

29% Fine Arts

9% Computer Science & Engineering

2% John Molson School of Business (JMSB)

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[1] Androsexual / androphilic 1.86%, Demiromantic 1.86%, Two-Spirit 2.41%, Aromantic 3.73%, Demisexual 7.45%, Questioning 7.45%, Asexual 8.70%, Lesbian 13.04%, Gay 20.50%, Pansexual 20.50%, Bisexual 39.75%, Queer 50.93%

[2] Demigirl 1.20%, Transgender Woman 1.20%, Cisgender Man 2.41%, Demiboy 2.41%, Two-Spirit 2.41%, Transfeminine 2.41%, Bigender 3.61%, Intersex 3.61% Male 7.23%, Agender 10.84%, Cisgender Woman 10.84%, Female 10.84% Androgyne 12.05% Transgender Man 14.46% Genderfluid 19.28%, Transmasculine 20.48%, Genderqueer 21.69%, Gender Non-Conforming 22.89% Questioning 22.89%, Non-Binary 46.99%

[3] African 1.79%, Black 1.79%, Métis 1.79%, Pacific Islander, 1.79%, Aboriginal 3.57%, African Caribbean 3.57%, First Nations 5.36%, Latino 5.36%, Chinese 7.14%, Latinx 8.93%, Arab 12.50%, Latina 12.50% Caucasian / White14.29%, Person of Colour 17.86%, Southeast Asian 17.86%, Mixed (or mixed-race) 30.36%

[4] Hard of hearing 6.67%, Learning / Cognitive disability 6.67%, Dyslexic 7.50%, Mobility related disability8.33%, ADD 10.00%, Disabled 10.00%, A person with a disability 15.83%, Sensory processing disorder 15.83%, Autistic 16.67%, Chronic Pain 24.17%, Neurodivergent 24.17%, ADHD 31.67%, Mental health condition 51.67%

Demographics

61% of students identified as LGBQ2S+[1]

> **50%** identified as Queer

> **40%** identified as Bisexual

> **20%** identified as Pansexual

33% of students identified as Trans / Non-Binary / Gender Diverse[2]

> **46%** identified as Non-Binary

> **22%** identified as Questioning

> **22%** identified as Gender Non-Conforming

72% of students identified as Caucasian / white

> **62%** of students who identified as Trans / Non-Binary / Gender Diverse identified as having a disability

50% of participants identified as having a disability

> **47%** identified having a mental health condition

> **29%** with ADHD

> **22%** identified as Neurodivergent

> **55%** identified as having a disability[4]

> **51%** having a mental health condition

> **25%** having chronic pain

> **22%** having ADHD

22% of students identified as Students of Colour[3]

> **70%** identified as LGBQ2S+

> **44%** identified as Bisexual

> **36%** identified as Queer

> **20%** identified as Gay

> **42%** students identified as Trans / Non-Binary / Gender Diverse

> **50%** identified as Non-Binary

> **33%** identified as Gender-Non Conforming

> **15%** identified as Gender-Fluid

Student Interviews & Focus Groups

Between October 2019 and February 2020, we conducted a total of two semi-structured focus groups, one closed for Trans, Non-binary, and Gender Diverse students (n=4), and one closed for LGBG+ students (n=3). All focus group participants identified as white, and from a total of 7 participants, 4 identified as having a disability.

We also interviewed a total of 8 students, 6 who were Students of Colour, all identifying as Trans and Queer except 1. Out of the 8 interviewees, 5 students identified as having a disability, 3 of those being QTBIPOC. When quoted, focus group participants and interviewees are identified by a pseudonym they chose and their identities, depending on their level of comfort with us identifying them in the report.

Professor Survey

Student Survey & Interviews

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LGBTQ2S+ survey faculty representation:

50.00%
(23 Responses)
Arts and Sciences - Social Sciences & Humanities

26.90%
(12 Responses)
Arts and Sciences - Sciences

26.90%
(12 Responses)
John Molson School of Business

2.17%
(1 Responses)
Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science

0.00%
(0 Responses)
Fine Arts

Disability survey faculty representation:

57.58%
(38 Responses)
Arts and Sciences - Social Sciences & Humanities

22.73%
(15 Responses)
Arts and Sciences - Sciences

19.70%
(13 Responses)
John Molson School of Business

3.03%
(2 Responses)
Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science

1.52%
(1 Responses)
Fine Arts

Service Provider Surveys

From July 2019 - September 2019, we conducted two quality assurance surveys with service providers (defined as those working in any "student" facing on-campus service). We received 93 responses to our survey concerning disability access and 78 responses to our LGBTQ2S+ focused survey.

Recruitment consisted of contacting 24 individual services through their respective director or manager to request assistance in the dissemination of the survey. In the end, we received responses from 17 different services.

These surveys only focused on:

1 If the service provider had received any role-specific training

2 The content of the training they received

3 The frequency of the training

4 Which policy they refer to at Concordia regarding the equitable treatment of these students

5 Office specific policies around access and how documents request gender/sex

6 If feedback on the service was solicited from these students.

7 Which department was provided training

8 What content was included in the training

Barriers within the pedagogical environment

Throughout our project, a common theme was the great inconsistency LGBTQ2S+ and Students with Disabilities experience at Concordia concerning how they will be treated. Students often felt that these experiences often reflected a general lack of training, resources, and knowledge amongst staff and faculty regarding gender and sexual diversity, anti-racism, and accessibility. At the same time, many also cited larger structural issues within Concordia that they felt contributed to the inconsistent environment they navigate, some being:

- Inaccessible infrastructure.

- No centralized equity office.

- Attitudinal barriers and inflexible concepts of disability.

- The whiteness of the institution and lack of wider practices of anti-racism.

- No mandatory training, or centralized resource hub to help professors and staff support LGBTQ2S+ & Disabled students.

While these will be attended to further within our recommendations, this report illustrates the urgent need for Concordia to address barriers manifested through behavior (how students are treated by professors and staff) and institutionally (the actions the university takes to uphold its values of supporting diversity).

"By the end of the day it was more like, oh, a couple of places [are] cool about pronouns and identities but most of them were just … either overlooking or just missing it. Which was, I don't know, it was just a bit frustrating, you know? I want to be able to express myself and then keep on building those identities and exploring … So obviously being kinda like my second home now … I want those spaces."

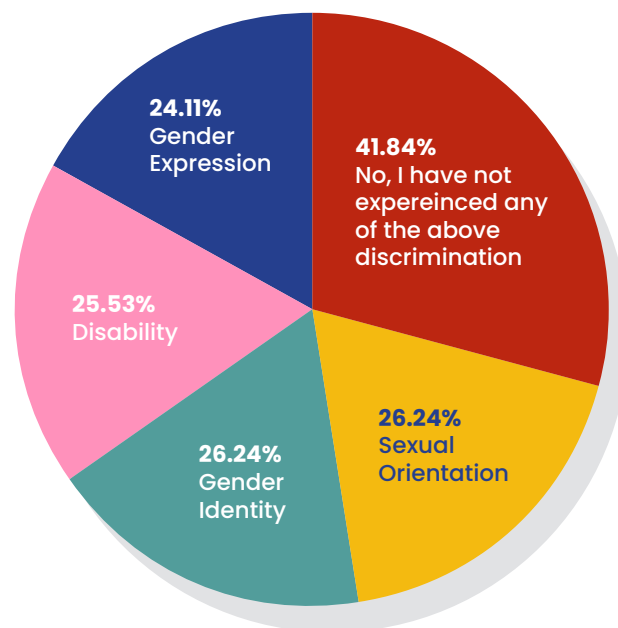*River – A Latinx, Pansexual, Non-binary/Gender-fluid Graduate Student*

Discrimination

While this report is mainly organized around "barriers" and "helpful strategies" (when applicable) provided by students, our survey gave students the opportunity to report types of discrimination they experienced within the classroom environment. In order to discuss some intersections of discriminatory experiences, we allowed students to identify multiple types of discrimination and focused this section on specific intersections between gender, sexual orientation, race, and disability that were prominent in our findings.

Overall, 42% of all white student respondents reported not experiencing discrimination on the basis of gender identity, expression, sexual orientation, or disability within the classroom compared to 23% of Students of Colour. While this is only a brief snapshot, it illustrates a need for an anti-racist, intersectional approach to the reduction of barriers that marginalized students experience at Concordia.

White Students
Types of discriminatory experiences

24.11% Gender Expression
41.84% No, I have not expereinced any of the above discrimination
25.53% Disability
26.24% Gender Identity
26.24% Sexual Orientation

Students of Colour
Types of discriminatory experiences

7.27% Disability
9.09% Other
10.91% Gender Expression
14.55% Sexual Orientation
21.82% Gender Identity
23.64% None of the above
50.91% Race
38.18% Ethnicity

LGBTQ+ White Students
Types of discriminatory experiences

- 35.59% No, I have not expereinced any of the above discrimination
- 31.36% Sexual Orientation
- 29.66% Gender Identity
- 27.12% Gender Expression
- 27.12% Disability
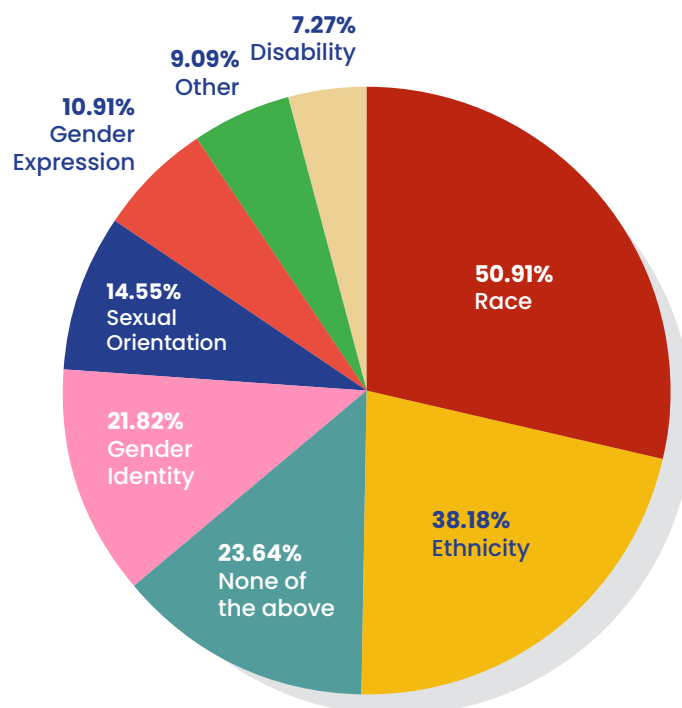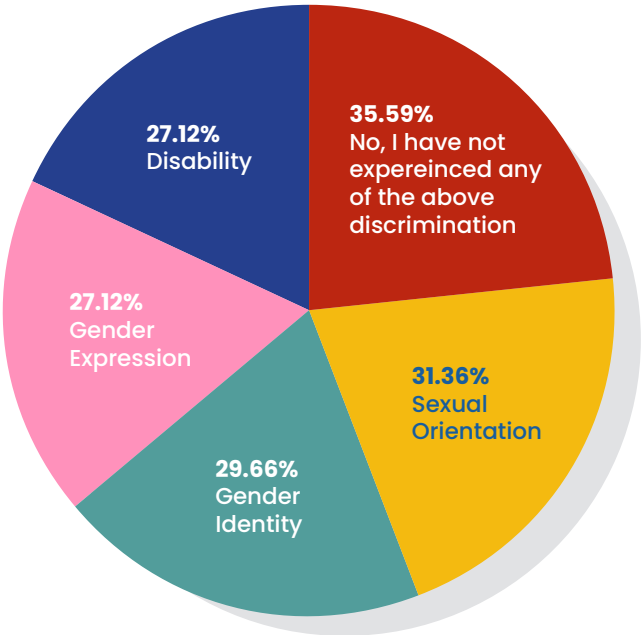
Experiences of discrimination varied for students with disabilities, depending on their intersecting identities. Many reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of disability, gender identity, gender expressi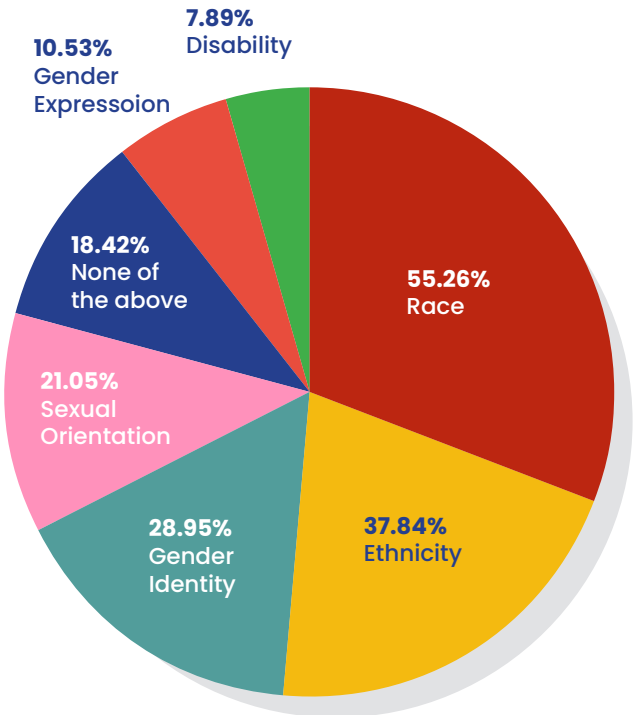on, and sexual orientation. This mainly represents Queer/Bi-Sexual Cisgender Women and Non-Binary students with disabilities. This calls for future disability-related work at Concordia to analyze the intersection of gender and disability as it concerns both Queer Cisgender women and Trans students while ensuring to take into account the very different experiences of both.

LGBTQ+ Students of Colour
Types of discriminatory experiences

- 7.89% Disability
- 10.53% Gender Expressoion
- 18.42% None of the above
- 21.05% Sexual Orientation
- 28.95% Gender Identity
- 37.84% Ethnicity
- 55.26% Race

Disabled Students
Types of discriminatory experiences

- 12.71% Ethnicity
- 13.56% Other
- 18.64% Race
- 21.19% Non of the above
- 27.12% Gender Expression
- 27.12% Sexual Orientation
- 33.05% Gender Identity
- 33.90% Disability
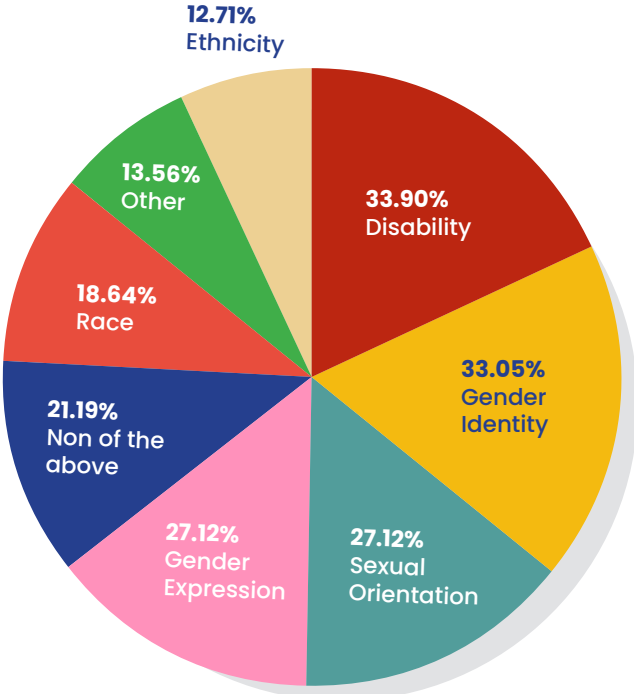
Facilitating discussions on Race

While this report is mainly organized around "barriers" and "helpful strategies" (when applicable) provided by students, our survey gave students the opportunity to report types of discrimination they experienced within the classroom environment. In order to discuss some intersections of discriminatory experiences, we allowed students to identify multiple types of discrimination and focused this section on specific intersections between gender, sexual orientation, race, and disability that were prominent in our findings.

Overall, 42% of all white student respondents reported not experiencing discrimination on the basis of gender identity, expression, sexual orientation, or disability within the classroom compared to 23% of Students of Colour. While this is only a brief snapshot, it illustrates a need for an anti-racist, intersectional approach to the reduction of barriers that marginalized students experience at Concordia.

A prominent pedagogical barrier amongst Students of Colour we interviewed was the harmful and challenging way

"Where you're the only person that can talk about this issue because you have literal experience with dealing with it. So sometimes you are that … spokesperson, as shitty as it sounds, right. As shitty as it is. Maybe there's another problem there. Or maybe many problems, depending on how you see it. I'm sometimes the only brown person in my classes, right. So sometimes, like, if somebody is talking a whole bunch of bullshit, I'm just like, oh my god, I need to say something."

Chicken Parmesan, An Indo-Guyanese / West Indian, Pansexual, Transgender girl

discourse surrounding race, ethnicity, and culture is facilitated in the classroom. While these issues were not isolated to one faculty, it was emphasized within classrooms and departments where the core curriculum includes race, gender, and sexuality (e.g. Anthropology, History, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy and Women Studies).

Some of the main barriers students reported were:

1 The lack of BIPOC students, especially in courses that centralize themes of race.

2 That students often become the "spokesperson" for marginalized identities in order to correct misinformation and/or add nuance to the conversation that is being missed.

3 Racist comments and microaggressions going unchallenged by the professor.

> "It helps to have a teacher of colour. Just because, if you have certain things I wanna say I know that they'll get it more. I took a class, critical race feminism and it was given by a woman of colour and it was like, really, really cool. So she actually does work in critical race … so a lot of people of colour in the program took that course."
>
> *Huakun – A Trans Student of Colour with a disability*

Within their interviews, Huakun & Chicken Parmesan articulated two important points concerning classroom dynamics that impact their experiences. One being who is represented within the classroom and who is teaching the course. As Huakun emphasized through his experience, these are often interlinked as many Students of Colour will attend a course on critical race because it is taught by a Professor of Colour.

In his interview, Huakun further highlighted some of the challenges in how discussions concerning race are being facilitated by professors. In his experience, one of the issues lies in the use of an open-debate style of facilitation. As he said, this often results in the "lived experience" of someone (e.g. a Trans Student or a Person of Colour), being debated. What he was touching upon in this observation is that often the inherent assumption

behind an open-debate style discussion is that students with the identities and experiences being discussed are not present in the classroom.

Huakun informed us that these issues of the open debate are further compounded by the fact that racism and transphobia in the classroom often go unchallenged by the professor:

> "I think that they [professors] have trouble to … shut down problematic things as it happens … a student will say something quite transphobic in class but they [the professor] won't ever jump in."

He went on to say when it comes to addressing both racism and transphobia, they may show support to the student affected in the form of accommodations but often lack a "preventative approach."

"Where you're the only person that can talk about this issue because you have literal experience with dealing with it. So sometimes you are that … spokesperson, as shitty as it sounds, right. As shitty as it is. Maybe there's another problem there. Or maybe many problems, depending on how you see it. I'm sometimes the only brown person in my classes, right. So sometimes, like, if somebody is talking a whole bunch of bullshit, I'm just like, oh my god, I need to say something."

Chicken Parmesan, An Indo-Guyanese / West Indian, Pansexual, Transgender girl

The need for professors to have more tools to disrupt racism, in particular, was further demonstrated within our survey results where 60% of all student respondents said that professors need more anti-racism training.

Curriculum and Faculty Representation

Within this section, we will touch upon gaps in the representation of marginalized identities and communities in both Concordia's curriculum and faculty. While we cover general themes from survey data and interviews, it's important to note respondents' answers were often focused on race, gender, and sexuality. While the need to hire Disabled Professors was brought forward, other issues were emphasized by Students with Disabilities. As we will demonstrate later, Disabled Students focused more on barriers concerning accommodations and accessibility than curriculum or representation. However, disability representation is still an area that must be addressed in future work.

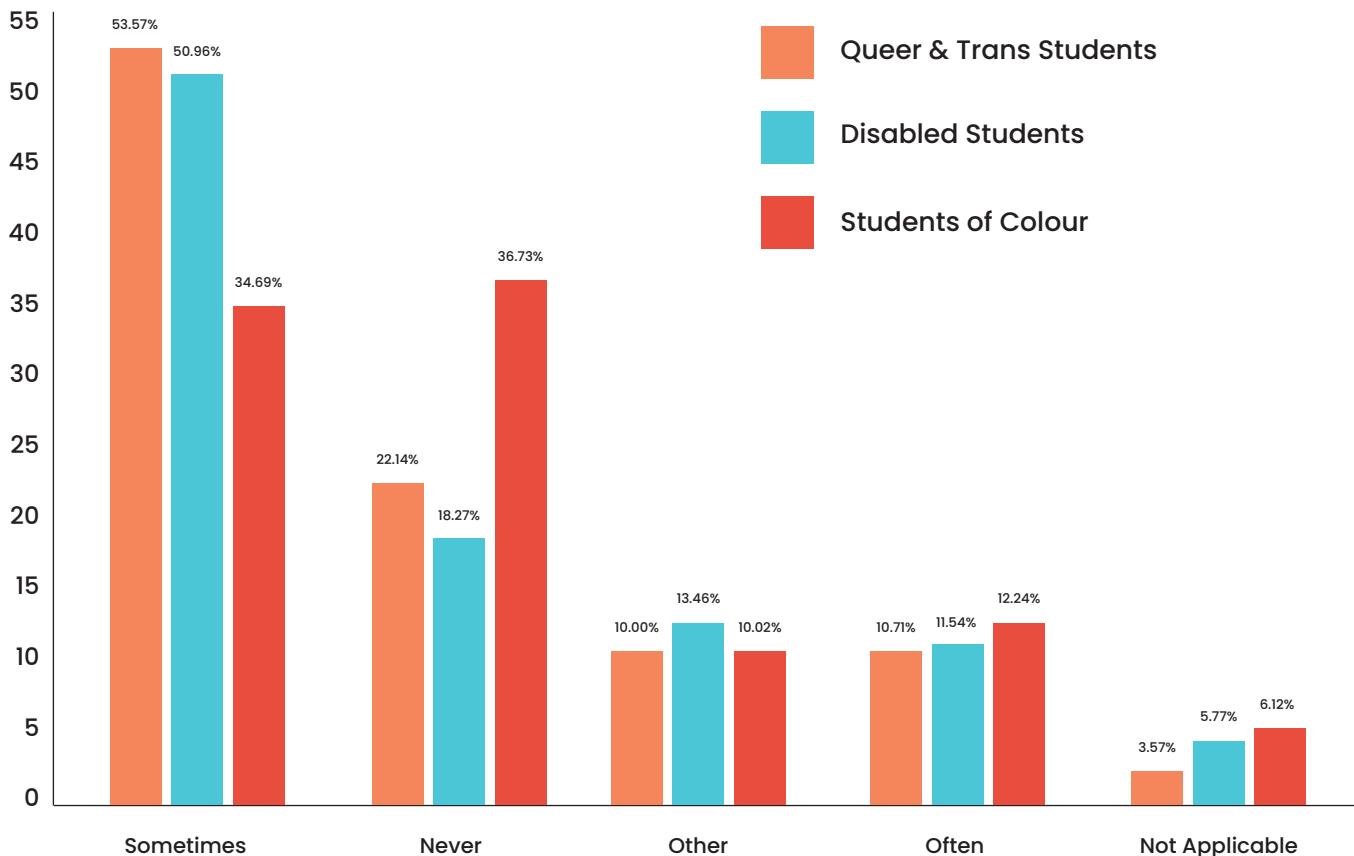The general barriers students raised were:

1 Emphasis on the gender-binary.

2 Use of outdated LGBTQ2S+ terminology and theories without contextualizing them as outdated/harmful.

3 Lack of LGBTQS+ curriculum that acknowledges complexity and intersectionality.

4 Lack of integrated QTBIPOC curriculum.

5 Lack of Two-Spirit focused content in all programs.

6 Lack of BIPOC & QTBIPOC Professors.

Curriculum Representation

Within our student survey, we asked participants one question concerning curriculum representation. Overall, LGBTQ2S+ students and Disabled students do not often feel their lived experiences and identities are represented in their class's curriculum. However, comparatively, Students of Colour, were most likely to feel they are never represented:

Do you see your different identities and lived experiences represented in the curriculum of the classes you take?

Legend:
- Queer & Trans Students
- Disabled Students
- Students of Colour

Category	Queer & Trans Students	Disabled Students	Students of Colour
Sometimes	53.57%	50.96%	34.69%
Never	22.14%	18.27%	36.73%
Other	10.00%	13.46%	10.02%
Often	10.71%	11.54%	12.24%
Not Applicable	3.57%	5.77%	6.12%

Sexuality & Gender Representation in Curriculum

> "The psychology department, in general, teaches a very heterosexist curriculum. They also often refer to mental health diagnoses or neurodivergent people as disordered or troubled or "a problem". Intersex people are never discussed or taught, and in general, there is no knowledge in course material that sex and gender refer to different things. There is a fixation with the idea that men and women are "opposites" and often are presented in studies this way. It is very isolating and infuriating to be in class often because this material is so out of date and insensitive."
>
> *A white, Queer, Female survey respondent*

Outdated curriculum that discusses sexuality and gender was an issue raised by students in a variety of classes and departments, not only within sexuality focused courses. However, Trans & Queer students in our focus groups emphasized barriers specific to sexuality courses that were taken across departments. Often Trans and Queer students expressed attending these courses to specifically seek out representation of their experiences. However, many expressed that some professors assigned to these courses are not equipped to support Trans students. This left them feeling disappointed, often dropping the course.

This is well illustrated through an experience of B, a white, Trans Non-Binary student who uses they/them pronouns, shared with us:

> "I was enrolled in a course and on the first day of class I was sitting front row center and the teacher made us make name tags kind of thing to put in front of us and I included my pronouns in it and then the professor proceeded to ... in front of the class ask me why I did that but she was doing it as a way to kind of like educate the class and I explained and then she asked me to pick up the name tag and show the class, kind of thing. And this is like a group of, like, fifty people that I don't know. And then proceeded ... try to explain to students what Trans is, while misgendering me for, about, ten minutes. And lucky I was surrounded by peers who were all very sympathetic and sitting there with me, uncomfortable. It was a course that was very clearly being taught by somebody who did not have the adequate tools to be teaching [it] and engaging with people in a way that was not harmful to them."

BIPOC & QTBIPOC Representation within Curriculum

In general, students called for a more integrated gender & sexuality curriculum that does not restrict BIPOC & QTBIPOC representation to one assignment, or one dedicated week. As we previously discussed, many students made specific connections between who is teaching a course and how topics of race are facilitated. Where curriculum is concerned, a similar theme was present in our findings:

For many students, curriculum representation was recognized as a complex issue that cannot be uncoupled from who the professor assigned to the course. A Two-Spirit student highlighted this by informing us that, "yes it is represented (their identities and lived experiences) but only represented by white people."

"My profs who are Women of Colour ensure that our curriculum is vast. My profs who are white, with perhaps two exceptions, have almost exclusively had white references"

Survey respondent

A need for a more Indigenous-focused curriculum was mentioned numerous times within survey answers from both Indigenous and non-indigenous students. More specifically the inclusion of Two-Spirit people, scholarship, and experiences in the curriculum and the university as a whole was repeated. However, it is clear that just incorporating these experiences and pedagogies into curriculum is not enough. When asked what Concordia can do to improve how LGBTQ2S+ people are represented in the classroom, A First Nations, Two-Spirit Student wrote:

"give the opportunity for First Nations kids interested in classes on reconciliation and indigenous studies because it is not reconciling anything if it's a classroom full of white kids!!!!!!! teach your instructors inclusion regarding FN ideologies and EDUCATE professors on how to diffuse racially charged aggressions/microaggressions. proper training for educators regarding reconciliation and indigenous inclusion. I had a professor tell our classroom the last residential school closed in 1992. Indigenous based curriculum should be prefaced by an introduction into indigenous research ideologies and methods. more education into two-spirit people and educating people about the specifics of the intersections of LGBTQ+ and indigeneity."

Overall, many students echo these points, that meaningful representation of scholarship and narratives from BIPOC & QTBIPOC communities required lived experience, training, personal connection to the individual communities, and meaningfully reflection on power dynamics.

Faculty Representation

It's estimated that racialized individuals only represent 12.3% of faculty members in Canadian Universities, with the largest representation within engineering and business while social sciences and humanities lag behind. Though this estimate includes Indigenous faculty, other studies show that Indigenous faculty across Canadian Universities make up only .9%-1.4%

Studies we located often account for gender gaps between cisgender racialized faculty, but do not collect data on sexual orientation, gender identity (beyond the binary male/female), nor disability. In general, we found reliable statistics concerning LGBTQ2S+ and Disabled faculty representation in Canada much harder to come by. Therefore, we did not include those in this report.

Through our student survey, it was apparent that when asked *"How do you feel about the representation of faculty in your department? Do you see yourself represented in who is teaching your courses?"* students understood that they may not know how faculty identifies:

"I don't know because I don't expect profs to reveal their sexuality or disabilities. But I am overrepresented in whiteness and see that as a huge problem" A white, Cisgender female, Queer, Disabled student.

[5] Frances Henry et al., The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), p. 17.

[6] Henry, Frances. "Indigenous Faculty at Canadian Universities: Their Stories." Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 44 no. 1, 2012, p. 101–132. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/ces.2012.0005.

[7] "Stats on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Canadian Universities," Universities Canada, February 12, 2020, https://www.univcan.ca/priorities/equity-diversity-inclusion/stats-on-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-at-canadian-universities/.

While reviewing these results, it's important to keep in mind the complexity behind assuming representation is not present. Many faculty members will choose not to disclose their identities to their students or colleagues. Given this, we can assume that our findings represent situations where faculty chose to disclose to students, are "visible minorities", or answers represent assumptions being made regarding a faculty member's identities. Either way, this provides a broad picture of student's feelings concerning faculty representation at Concordia and highlights gaps perceived by students, particularly in the representation of QTBIPOC people and Disabled People of Colour.

White Disabled Students

Sometimes	46.75%
Never	28.57%
Often	11.69%
Not applicable	6.49%

Disabled Students of Colour

Never	42.31%
Sometimes	38.46%
Often	7.69%
Not applicable	3.85%

White LGBTQ+ Students

Sometimes	51.89%
Never	26.42%
Often	10.38%
Not applicable	6.25%

LGBTQ2S+ Students of Colour

Never	51.52%
Sometimes	27.27%
Often	9.09%
Not applicable	3.03%

Accessibility Challenges

This section will attend to accessibility barriers brought forward by Disabled Students which covers both attitudinal barriers and how the learning environment is structured. These barriers are far-reaching and impact students in a variety of ways, one being whether or not they can finish the course.

When asked, "Have you ever dropped a course because it was being inaccessible to you? (i.e. because of physical access or the professor's teaching methods being inaccessible),

42% of students with disabilities answered that yes they have.

"I've had professors … that are understanding if I come and go in class…I've also had professors that say … if I want anything, I will have to get a note every time. I think it was four years ago, one of them was like, you know, people have anxiety, you have to deal with it. I've also had another professor that I was presenting privately to and, I was really nervous so I was talking really fast and he told me he thought I had Asperger's and I was like, 'That's really inappropriate.'"

Effie, A Student with a Disability.

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[8] "Understanding Barriers to Accessibility," Accessible Campus, June, 2013, https://accessiblecampus.ca/understanding-accessibility/what-are-the-barriers/

[9] Ibid

Attitudinal Barriers

Throughout survey responses and interviews, Students with Disabilities mainly focused on attitudinal barriers that they are experiencing mainly within their interactions with professors. For this section, attitudinal barriers can be understood as "behaviors, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against persons with disabilities"[8] Often attitudinal barriers manifest due to a lack of understanding of disability[9] and how to accommodate for a diversity of learners, which was clear through many examples provided by students:

"Professors need to unlearn what a disabled student looks like, they need to be more flexible/understanding of students unable to meet deadlines, there needs to be more discussion on alternative assignments and possibilities for extra credit, discussions on recording classes for folk who are physically unable to get there"

A white, Disabled, Queer, Non-binary student.

The general barriers students raised were:

1 Lack of flexibility in accommodations.

2 Stigmatizing, belittling response to accessibility requests.

3 Lack of understanding of Neurodiversity / mental health conditions as requiring accommodations.

4 Medical documentation being refused.

5 Major inconsistency concerning how professors will respond to accommodation requests/disability disclosures.

Many Neurodivergent students or students with an "invisible" disabilities (e.g. chronic pain, mental health conditions), felt that professors did not understand that in order to be successful as students, they require adjustments/accommodations to be made, and many would respond to requests from students with dismissive and belittling attitudes:

"I've had trouble getting extensions because of episodic pain related to disability. I had to defend myself and argue with the teacher until she pulled out the course outline with disability resource info on it. She then told me what my disability and comorbidity with other learning disabilities statistically looks like, instead of listening to my lived experience. I did not get an extension (I was asking for only 2 or 3 days)"

A Student of Colour, with disabilities who is Non-Binary and Queer.

Instances where students' requests were denied by professors even when appropriate medical documentation was provided, were especially concerning. As Special Business, a Queer student of Colour with a disability shared in their interview:

"There was one prof that I even came to like they had gotten an email from the Access entre on my behalf, I had a doctors note, I had all the documentation, and still they weren't cooperative at all with helping me with assignments that I couldn't hand in. I ended up just having like zero on that assignment, but I had all the documentation."

Disabled students reported a large variety of further consequences from these attitudinal barriers at Concordia, including but not limited to: not wanting to attend class, dropping the course (as shown above), inability to perform academically, and a feeling that their disability must not "count" if they have to fight this hard to receive accommodations.

In addition to directly impacting a student's ability to meet the course requirements, attitudinal barriers have direct impacts on students' interest and ability to continue to seek support. While "Self-advocacy" is currently outlined as a Disabled student's responsibility within Concordia's Student Accessibility Policy[10], there are no responsibilities for professors outlined within the policy nor mandatory training on accessibility and disability rights. This leaves students navigating an inconsistent and unsupportive environment when disclosing their disability. Popeye, a Student of Color with a disability outlined some of the difficulty:

"For things like mood disorders, even more so for things like ADHD, it's hard for teachers to believe when a student is struggling and just think that maybe you're just not applying yourself and it's exhausting to have to do that every semester. It's like, playing a game "will this teacher be open to understanding a struggle that a student may have that's invisible". So, I can't comment that I'm comfortable with self-advocating."

Attitudinal barriers were also shared through the professor's response to our survey on disability. The comment below also refers to an exclusionary academic culture that perpetuates ableism:

"My faculty colleagues are in general quite insensitive and ableist. Business school is a survival of the fittest culture and I have seen and heard my own colleagues make disparaging remarks about differences or even mocking us who are trying to do better. I believe this constitutes an unwelcoming and exclusionary environment."

Survey Respondent, John Molson School of Business (JMSB)

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[10] Concordia University. Policy on Accessibility for Students with Disabilities. PDF file. April 2, 2003. https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/common/docs/policies/official-policies/PRVPA-14.pdf

Accessibility Challenges – Teaching & learning structure

This section explores barriers that Students with Disabilities are experiencing within the pedagogical structure of the classrooms at Concordia, which in this circumstance means how the class is taught and evaluated. Often, as demonstrated by the quote above, barriers in the pedagogical structure are intertwined with attitudinal barriers that create an "othering" environment for Students with Disabilities. Given this, both attitudinal and pedagogical barriers need to be addressed together.

"I find it immensely frustrating to hear other professors disparage the needs of students with challenges - some insist, for example, that they don't allow electronic devices in their classroom because the students surf. This practice severely limits the capabilities of say neurodiverse individuals - this practice is not an inclusive practice, severely limiting students' abilities to reach their individual potential. There are also some professors who say "there are too many of them" (students with challenges), setting up boundaries of 'us vs them' where the 'them' is anyone who is different. There needs to be a mind shift that education is and can be available to those individuals who are interested in acquiring knowledge."

Professor, Arts & Science - Social Science & Humanities.

The general barriers within the teaching structure raised were:

- Inflexible attendance & participation policies.
- Lack of clarity regarding expectations on assignments.
- Not changing teaching method/delivery (i.e. slowing down, re-explaining) when requested.
- Learning material & notes not being uploaded to internal Concordia learning systems.
- No breaks in 2-3 hour classes.
- Strict rules against laptops.
- Not allowing lectures to be recorded.
- Strict rules against laptops.
- Not allowing lectures to be recorded.

Though we only cover attendance & participation below, strategies currently being used by Concordia professors to reduce the above barriers are discussed in more detail in our Accessibility - Positive Strategies for Professors section

Attendance and Participation Policies

While often combined with other issues, one of the most commonly cited barriers within the classroom structure for Students with Disabilities is the use of attendance and participation as markers of good performance. Amongst Disabled Students who participated in our research, the majority felt that attendance and participation policies were often inflexible and unclear, hindering their ability to perform their best academically. Inflexible attendance policies create barriers for many students because depending on their individual circumstances, impacts of disability can be unpredictable, making it difficult to keep a consistent schedule and/or always physically attend class. Maintaining flexibility concerning attendance contributes to an environment of equitable participation.

"Professors having an actual full understanding of what the ACSD does, as well as how to treat people w/ disabilities and how to talk to them. I've had a prof share an email telling my whole class I'm disabled. – better skills for addressing ableism in classroom structure, expectations, and attendance records. Students shouldn't have to disclose a disability to miss class"

A white, Queer, Disabled Cisgender woman.

Participation marks were also noted by students as often confusing and unclear. This was because what "counts" as participatory behavior is often not made explicit by the professor. Furthermore, due to barriers associated with their disability, many students felt that certain requirements of participation, especially group work, affected their ability to do well in a class.

The majority of the professors who responded to our survey showed flexibility in their application of both attendance and participation grading (see at end of the page).

We hypothesize that the incongruence between the responses we received from professors and those from students is because our survey mainly attracted professors already familiar with a disability and applying accessibility concepts within their classrooms. This can be seen in the flexibility of accommodations shown in the next section.

"There is no participation grade because I realized that this negatively impacts some students, whether because they do not participate (e.g., social anxiety) or because they have something else going on in their lives (e.g., kids, jobs)"

Assistant Professor, JMSB

"I believe that grading participation is a silly practice."

Professor, Arts, and Sciences – Social Science & Humanities

Professor answers to, *If you provide marks for participation in your classes, what do you count as participation?*

85%
Engagement with Assigned Reading

80%
Asking Questions

60%
Interaction with other students

47.5%
Group Work

47.5%
Punctuality and Attendance

Accessibility in the Classroom – Helpful Strategies

We would like to help create a collective response to reducing barriers for Students with Disabilities at Concordia by highlighting accessibility strategies brought forward by Students with Disabilities. If the learning environment becomes more flexible to different learning styles and needs, professors improve their chances of successfully transferring knowledge. According to Disabled Students, many of these strategies are already taking place in Concordia classrooms.

"I allow electronics (phones and laptops) in class. Students have two participation "freebies," where they can miss two classes during the semester with no justification required, without negatively impacting their grade. I register all my tests with the ACSD office. Students can miss one test during the semester, with no justification required, without negatively impacting their grades. I try to give my class diverse test questions, assignments, and exercises to connect with different types of learning."

Professor, JSMB

"Having a lot of different ways to teach class material throughout the semester. This means you probably won't do well on every assignment but you would have a chance to do excellent on the type of assignment that suits your neural design"

A white, Genderfluid, Queer, Neurodivergent Student.

Strategies recommended by Students with Disabilities at Concordia.

1   Having a warm, understanding, flexible attitude towards accommodations.

2   Clear and precise grading criteria.

3   Normalizing the need for accommodations/adjustments at the beginning of class.

4   Being flexible with extensions, attendance, and participation.

5   Accommodating disability-related absences - without always requiring medical documentation.

6   Using a variety of modes of content delivery and evaluation.

7   Using current terminology for disability.

8   Allowing students to take vbreaks as they needed without permission and Implementing breaks for classes that are over an hour.

9   Gaining an understanding that "people with disabilities" is not "one homogeneous group" and is vastly varied, especially around intersections of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

10 Being open to feedback, and checking that students are absorbing course content.

11 Clear expectations of assignments / what success mean in the class

Can come in the form of:

Clear rubrics for assignments.

Working to clarify any "unspoken" rules there may be (e.g. a professor with a sociology background teaching in another faculty but expecting certain sociological frameworks to be applied).

Clear attendance and participation grading schematic if applicable.

Defining participation, if applicable.

When asked what accommodations professors provide to students, without formal requests through the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD), their responses showed the application of great flexibility (see below). While students felt that professors required a variety of more training in accessibility (see below), professor responses show that informal accommodations are being made already and that this flexibility can be better replicated throughout the University.

Professor answers regarding informal accommodations they have made:

Missing Classes	80%
Use of Laptops	78.18%
Extension of due dates	72.73%
Late/Early Leave	72.73%
Lecture Recordings	60%
Alterives to group presentations	45.45%
Other	20%

Student responses to indicating where they felt professors require more training:

79.76%	Accomodating students with extensions when lateness is disability related
77.38%	Using teaching methods that are more accessible to students who are neurodivergent
71.43%	Undetstanding the accomdationgs process at the Accessbility Centre
59.52%	Adaptive technology
52.38%	Teaching methods for students who have mobility related disabilities
46.43%	Not shaming students for being disabled
14.29%	Other
2.38%	None

To summarize, many of the recommendations from students were grounded in the need for flexible and understanding attitudes. We do not expect professors to be experts in universal design or anti-ableism (strategies, theories, and actions that actively removes barriers for disabled people), but to start with being open to students' varying needs and find ways to actively create an environment where disability is welcome. This openness to individual experience is summed up well in Pufferfish's explanation of what leniency means to them as a Neurodivergent student, it is not a "free for all" but:

"Leniency as in you are all humans, you all have bodies, you all have lives, you can do what makes sense in your life and that doesn't need to be you sitting here, straight through, ad nauseam, whether we have a break or not in this particular three-hour class ..and trusting that students are just, you know, not being disrespectful or not caring about the subject matter or something like this when it's actually understood as students being students to the best of their ability."

Pufferfish, a white, Non-Binary, Queer, Neurodivergent student.

Trans, Non-Binary & Gender Diverse students' experiences at Concordia

Within our survey, it was clear from students that professors could use more structural support from the university in learning how to better support Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Diverse students. When asked what knowledge and training students felt professors needed, students felt professors needed a wide range of training. Furthermore, we found little difference in answers between students (i.e. the order of answers from LGBTQ2S+ and Students of Colour did not differ significantly from the ones below):

Check all where you feel faculty require more training and knowledge

Not assuming gender of students	70.78%
Using non-gendered terms	69.48%
Using gender neutral pronouns	66.88%
Knowing trans affirmative resources for students both on and off campus	62.34%
Anti-Racism	59.09%
Using correct pronouns for students	56.49%

General Barriers

As demonstrated earlier, immediate attention is needed in addressing racism, hiring more BIPOC & QTBIPOC faculty, and meaningfully incorporating Two-spirit experiences, knowledges, and pedagogies into the curriculum and university. Further to these needs, Trans, Non-binary & Gender-Diverse Students reported many other opportunities for improvement at Concordia. This section addresses those barriers not already addressed.

General barriers Trans, Non-Binary & Gender Diverse (hereafter Trans) students raised were:

1 Misgendering students (referring to a student as the wrong gender / using the wrong pronoun).

2 Assuming students' gender and only using binary language.

3 Role call processes that out Trans students.

4 Not respecting pronouns, especially gender-neutral pronouns after a student has disclosed.

5 Faculty cultures contributing to Trans students feeling unsafe

When we asked survey respondents how they felt, Trans students are treated in the classroom environment at Concordia, the answers from Trans students were mostly negative. While some students shared positive experiences, they also recognized great inconsistency across both faculty and departments concerning how they are treated. In many cases, students noted a lack of institutional structure that could address these barriers:

"Completely varies depending on the prof's attitudes. It feels like profs have full discretion over their behavior and, if it is not welcoming, little incentive to change."

A white, Neurodivergent, Queer, Genderqueer, student.

Amongst the inconsistencies that were mentioned by Trans students were informed that some roll call processes used in class have negative consequences. Students recalled different ways professors take attendance, from professors calling out names to passing around sheets with full names listed. These processes created issues because depending on the time of the semester and other variables, not all students may have changed their names with the Registrar before attending class. In these cases, roll calls (especially those that are verbal) out Trans students, which is not only an invasion of privacy but can also be dangerous to Trans people[11] and have many consequences for students who are not out. While not all professors take attendance, it is important that alternatives are put in place that respects the autonomy and safety of Trans students.

Prominent themes amongst Trans survey respondents were those of erasure, tokenization, and misunderstanding. As the students above mentioned, this is across faculty and departments. However, some students focused on specific faculty environments that contributed to them not feeling safe:

"Within the engineering faculty, lack of open or outward messages of Trans/GNC acceptance, overall, within the faculty and student body. This is compounded by the fact that engineering tends to be somewhat conservative and the student body is largely male: there is a fairly visible amount of 'bro' culture, and they certainly still exist outright cultural sexism against women in engineering, let alone trans/GNC. One doesn't feel safe being oneself within the faculty at large, and we don't really have WIE (Women in Engineering) or similar organizations representing us within the faculty."

Survey respondent

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[11] "Tips for Allies of Transgender People," GLAAD, June 2020, https://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies

Misgendering

The experience of being misgendered was often coupled with Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Diverse student's feelings of erasure and alienation. Amongst the students we spoke with, being misgendered in the classroom was especially common for those who use they/them & other non-binary pronouns.

Research has shown that correct pronoun usage contributes to Trans student's feelings of "safety, respect, acceptance, and wellbeing"[12]. However, Concordia currently does not have any University-wide policy or guidelines concerning pronoun use, which could resolve gaps

In our focus group with Trans students, they expanded on the experiences of being misgendered and some of the strategies professors will use to avoid this:

"Despite telling my teacher my pronouns and how I identify as one teacher continuously referred to the whole class as 'girls' and kept misgendering me without ever apologizing. Another time, after explaining to another teacher about my gender identity, they proceeded to ask invasive questions about my identity and sexuality."

A Gay, Non-Binary, Latinx Student.

"Most of my experiences with professors have been, most of them won't use pronouns to refer to me, which I think is like, I mean I would prefer it to misgendering me, so I'm like, OK with it at as a compromise, but the professors who've like, made me feel the most seen are the professors who deliberately use my pronouns and that's only been with one professor, so [laughter], ya. So the rest of them will just usually not address me using pronouns."

Cricket

[12] Dot Brauer, "Hiding in Plain Sight: How Binary Gender Assumptions Complicate Efforts to Meet Transgender Students' Name and Pronoun Needs" (PhD diss., The University Of Vermont, 2017), p. 24.

As Cricket's experience illustrates, students feel more "seen" when their pronouns are respected. We understand that professors who use the above strategy (only referring to the name of a Trans student) are often doing this to avoid misgendering. However, as it is often done within the context of only being applied to the Trans student, and not other students in the class, this can create an exclusionary environment.

When brainstorming how this could be managed in the classroom environment with Trans interviewees and focus group participants, many pointed to the need for the change to come not only from individual professors but the University itself. Some departments provide resources for professors concerning pronoun usage and creating more respectful environments for Trans students. However, without appropriate training mechanisms or support systems for professors to learn these skills, it doesn't always result in these resources being used. As Cricket, explained:

"I don't know if training is the answer, but it's a possibility that maybe professors should have some sort of training on Trans issues specifically and Queer issues more generally … I went to a teaching assistant training and the professor giving it, part of the training was this page on how to support trans students, but he had clearly not been trained on it because when he got to that he was like, "Um, well, I don't quite know much about this but here's a piece of paper and you should probably read it," so, the other TA's didn't get any training on it because the professor wasn't able to train them"

Strategies to Improve Trans Students' Experiences

One of the strategies professors can adopt right now to make their classroom environment more welcoming and safer for Trans Students is to use their correct pronouns. The students we had the privilege of hearing from need professors and the University to undertake more strategies to reduce the inconsistencies and resistance they experience concerning the use of their pronouns.

Beyond pronoun usage, these are some of the strategies that Trans Students reported to us that can create a more respectful and welcoming environment. It's important to note that students often raised the issue of displaying interest or commitment versus taking action. In order for Trans Students to feel more welcome and safe, there needs to be continuous, meaningful action taken by professors and by Concordia as a whole.

This list is non-exhaustive as many strategies are also raised within our recommendations at the end of the report.

Strategies recommended by Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Diverse Students at Concordia.

1 If a professor feels it is safe to do so, they can offer their pronouns at the beginning of class to normalize the use of them.

2 Private introductory sheets where students write their name and gender and normalizing not gendering people in class discussions.

3 Not doing public roll calls.

4 Anti-discrimination statements in syllabi that have accountability mechanisms in place.

5 Proactively advising students on how to use gender-neutral pronouns.

6 Actively challenging transphobia and showing accountability to your students.

7 Correcting misgendering but not lingering / over apologizing.

8 Avoiding gendering language such as "girls".

Service Level

Overview – Responses to Service Provider Survey

October 7th, 2020

Accessibility Training

As expected, the ACSD is most frequently imparting training on Accessibility and is the most noted resource providing training to service staff. Overall, only 19% of the service providers we surveyed had received "role-specific" training at Concordia on "how to serve students with disabilities." When we factor out the answers from the ACSD, this decreased to 13%, making 70% of service providers outside of the ACSD having not received accessibility training specific to their role while 13% received "non-role specific" training. As illustrated in the table below, the majority of the training covered how to "generally support" students, however, some were more exhaustive covering specific topics. Some qualitative answers pointed to training that covered specific technical aspects of access, such as software.

Overall, with the exception of the ACSD, training on accessibility is infrequent across campus services, with some survey respondents noting that it had been years in-between sessions. Although the frequency of the training is outlined below, it is important to note that when reviewing individual responses from the same service, providers' answers varied. For example, one service provider would say the training was a one-time offer while the other said it was annual.

40%	One time training
22%	Annual
11%	Unsure
3%	Monthly

81.48%

How to generall support students with disabilities in accessing our service

33.33%

How to specfically support students who are neurodiverse in accessing our service

22.22%

How to support students on the autism spectrum in accesing out service

14.81%

How to make promotional material accessible on screen readers

18.52%

How to make promotional material generally more accessible

33.33%

How to specifically support students who use mobility devices in accessing our service

29.63%

The impact of how experiencing other discrimination can affect a student with disability accessining campus services

25.93%

The concept of abelism

14.81%

None of the above

LGBTQ2S+ service training

Similar to the responses concerning training on Accessibility, there was a low number of service staff members that reported receiving training to serve LGBTQ2S+ students:

17%   Yes
70%   No
9%   Receive non-role specific training
3%   Unsure

As outlined below, the training covered a range of topics mainly focusing on terminology that concerns Trans students as well as barriers Trans students face.

Though the majority of the training was mandatory, 65% stated it was only a one-time training.

65%   One time training
25%   Unsure
10%   Annual

Currently, Concordia does not have any specific policy that guides the equitable treatment of LGBTQ2S+ students on campus. The policy on Rights and Responsibilities refers to a "students' right to be free of discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation". However, only 30% of our respondents know to refer to this policy, while 40% were unfamiliar with any of the policies we listed.

As requesting a student to disclose their gender on documentation is a barrier for Trans students, especially if the options provided are binary, we included a question regarding documentation collected by these service providers. While 43% of respondents said the service does not request students to provide sex or gender, 37% of all respondents stated that there were documents that only provide male or female options. Only 4% provided an "other" option for gender, 4% provided an empty box for students to fill in, and 2% requested pronouns.

20% How to recognize transphobia

10% How to recognize homophobia

45% How to be a good ally to LGBTQ2S+ students

60% Barrier transgender & gender non-conforming students face

40% Barrier sexual minority students face

40% The impact of how experiencing other discrimination can affect a transgender student accessing services

50% What to do when the gender marker on an ID or form doesnt match the apparent gender of the indivdual

45% Healthcare needs for transgender students

45% How to best support students through transitioning

70% How to incorporate trans affirmative practices as a service prodivder

75% How to use gender neutral terms

65% How to respectfully ask someone for their pronouns

45% How to apologize when misgendering somone

Though the majority of the training was mandatory, 65% stated it was only a one-time training.

65% One time training

25% Unsure

10% Annual

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However, only 30% of our respondents know to refer to this policy, while 40% were unfamiliar with any of the policies we listed. As requesting a student to disclose their gender on documentation is a barrier for Trans students, especially if the options provided are binary, we included a question regarding documentation collected by these service providers. While 43% of respondents said the service does not request students to provide sex or gender, 37% of all respondents stated that there were documents that only provide male or female options. Only 4% provided an "other" option for gender, 4% provided an empty box for students to fill in, and 2% requested pronouns.

Services – Student Experiences

Through our student survey, many students expressed positive experiences accessing student services. Barriers students reported were often either attitudinal or informational. While the more prominent service-specific barriers will be discussed in the next section, the general challenges LGBTQ2S+ and Disabled students experience accessing Concordia services are:

1 Sending students to other offices without first checking if that office will meet their needs.

2 Condescending tones and attitudes that make students feel belittled or dismissed.

3 Service websites that do not have clear information concerning the bureaucratic processes for certain requests.

Campus Wellness Services

In our interviews and focus groups, students had the opportunity to express more detailed experiences with campus services. Through these conversations, barriers within certain services became clear. These barriers were most often faced within the three Campus Wellness services:

1 Health Services

2 Counselling & Psychological Services:

3 ACSD

Some of the main barriers students reported while accessing Wellness Services were:

ACSD

"Packaged" accommodations not meeting their needs.

Financial restrictions to diagnosis.

Need for more resources to be allocated to ACSD.

Communication between ACSD and professors.

Workshop content not being adjusted for Neurodivergent students.

Health Services

The low amount of doctors who are available that are known to practice trans-affirmative care.

How medical documentation for disability accommodation is obtained through Health Services.

Counselling & Psychological Services:

Strict triage times that are inaccessible to students, especially those in crisis.

Lack of accountability concerning complaints & grievances.

The low number of counselors available compared to the student body.

Incongruence between positive mental health campaigns and access to mental health services.

Counselling & Psychological Services

Strict triage times that are inaccessible to students, especially those in crisis.

Lack of accountability concerning complaints & grievances.

The low number of counselors available compared to the student body.

Incongruence between positive mental health campaigns and access to mental health services.

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities

As the above student mentions, the ACSD offers necessary support to numerous Concordia students with disabilities (roughly over 2000). In addition, the ACSD was recognized by students for employing People with Disabilities, which often made accessing services more comfortable for students, especially those who also saw their intersecting identities reflected in staff at ACSD.

While this section attends to barriers Disabled Students raised regarding the ACSD, we first want to recognize it for the invaluable resource that it is. In addition, this section should be contextualized the majority of students who spoke with us also recognized that the ACSD requires more institutional support and is restricted, structurally.

Neurodivergent students often brought up two major concerns, "packaged" accommodations and financial restrictions to receiving a diagnosis. Assessment for "learning disabilities" (LD's) can exceed $3,000 and is often an overwhelming and lengthy process for anyone to pursue.[13] However, without this assessment students cannot access ACSD support. Many students we spoke with had no choice but to pursue an assessment in order to get their needs

"More training for faculty and staff. More money put into the services really. It seems like they're underfunded and spread too thin. It'd be cool to see more "fun" stuff come out of the ACSD rather than they seemingly needing to put out fires all the time. I love the Access Centre but I feel disconnected from them. They're such a great and important service and I'd maybe like to see them on and around campus more. More visible I suppose."

Survey respondent

met at the University, despite there being no financial support available for this requirement.

For those who do become registered with the ACSD, the way accommodations are "packaged" can be limiting. For example, while some students really require additional time for exams, others need more "nuanced" support to succeed. Often, students felt unsupported if their needs "fell outside the box" / ACSD lacked the resources to support them:

> "Whenever I tried to go back [to ACSD] and be like, hey do you have, you know, as a student, through the access center do we have free like, text to voice screen readers, do we have access to, you know, anything that would actually help me get through my day and like stay focused and be organized and they had just really … well, they have just very limited funding, is what I think it is. So, people don't have the time. Like staff there don't have the time to expand or look at different angles on how to help students.."
>
> *Pufferfish*

As we have demonstrated previously, Students with Disabilities face multiple barriers when it comes to receiving accommodations from professors. However, who can enforce a needed request, and what the limits are, is unclear to students. While the professor's who answered our survey mostly felt "familiar" (60%) with the process of accommodations and ACSD services, many also expressed needing more specific, and continuous training, emphasizing a need to "be more informed":

As we have demonstrated previously, Students with Disabilities face multiple barriers when it comes to receiving accommodations from professors. However, who can enforce a needed request, and what the limits are, is unclear to students. While the professor's who answered our survey mostly felt "familiar" (60%) with the process of accommodations and ACSD services, many also expressed needing more specific, and continuous training, emphasizing a need to "be more informed":

> "It would help to be a bit more informed about the type of support students may need in the classroom, rather than only getting a list of names from the ACSD office."
>
> *Professor, John Molson School of Business*

[13] Tony Chambers, Melissa Bolton, and Mahadeo A Sukhai, "Financial Barriers for Students with Non-Apparent Disabilities within Canadian Postsecondary Education," Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability 26, no. 1 (2013): pp. 53-66, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1026811.pdf.

We believe that if this gap is closed and professors receive more training and support, they will feel better equipped to adjust their courses and teaching styles to meet the needs of more students. As demonstrated above, some professors had to "self-train" to gain more of an understanding of disability. Furthermore, if professors and students are better informed of who has the power when it comes to specific accommodations (e.g. missing class etc), or has more direction from ACSD regarding how to "assess" an accommodation empathetically.

Lastly, students raised concerns regarding workshops at ACSD not being facilitated in a way that was accessible to them. A barrier best articulated by Leah, a Neurodivergent, Woman of Colour we interviewed:

"The workshops we have ... through the Access Centre, they are the same setting as the class. You sit down at a table, looking at a projector and that's what we do. Like, and they're mostly people with, like, neurodivergent people so, I'm like, [laughs] what? How's this going to help?"

Students who mentioned the workshops felt that they could become places where students "share with each other", creating more social opportunities at ACSD, a need many students felt was not currently attended to.

[14] Luisa Kcomt et al., "Healthcare Avoidance Due to Anticipated Discrimination among Transgender People: A Call to Create Trans-Affirmative Environments," SSM - Population Health 11 (May 2020): pp. 1-8, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100608.

[15] "Medical Services" Concordia University, n.d. https://www.concordia.ca/students/health/medical-services.html

Health Services

In our interviews and focus groups, Trans students often pointed to recently noticing an immense improvement in Health Services, mostly referring to the same two doctors who offer trans-affirmative care. Students also mentioned that service staff works to ensure their correct pronouns and names are used. However, this has not always been the case, leaving several students hesitant to pursue healthcare on campus:

"I don't have any personal experience with, like, the doctors or the psychiatrist here because I've just gone off campus because of not feeling comfortable that they would know how to support me. I can't really speak to what it's actually like, but I think it's really important that students have access to that kind of service, especially since, it is often the most affordable way for a student to, like, see a doctor or a psychiatrist, so, ya."

Cricket's sentiments regarding Healthcare avoidance due to uncertainty and anticipated discrimination is well documented in other research.[14] While the Health Services website was recently updated to state that doctors "provide trans care, including hormone therapy"[15] there is no information on which doctors offer this care. More visible commitment to trans-affirmative care (and transparent feedback processes) could be one step to creating more inclusive health services.

In her interview, Chicken Parmesan, who does use Health Services, pointed to the need to ensure who is hired within Health Services reflects the values of Concordia of being a LGBTQ2S+ inclusive university:

"I think the doctor I'm seeing … is one of the only doctors that talks about hormone therapy and stuff like that so, I think there needs to be more people that have specializations in these fields. I think that if you're going to promote yourself as, like, an LGBTQ inclusive friendly university then you need to start investing in, like, people that know about that shit, right. You can't just have two people in your whole health services that, like, that can help, like, a huge number of, like, trans people, or non-binary people"

For Trans students, ensuring Health Services staff had their correct pronouns and names was also mentioned. Students experienced having to provide them multiple times to personnel, raising the question concerning protocol for documenting pronouns and name changes from students within the service. Students expressed that staff were often very quick to make adjustments, but required more training on how to request pronouns and ensure files remain updated.

Though it was mainly Trans students who discussed barriers within Concordia's Health Services, several Students with Disabilities informed us of issues in regards to obtaining needed medical documentation in both registering with ACSD or pursuing accommodations for extensions, etc.

As the practitioner in the above story suggested to Leah that having a note documenting anxiety may cause professors to have a "bad impression", it demonstrates attitudinal barriers that should be evaluated within Health Services. Students with Disabilities also shared with us many stories of the process of receiving notes from Concordia for accommodations, and the need to go through Health Services to access a Psychiatrist. There was confusion concerning who has the authority to write such notes, illustrating to us that these processes need to be clearer on the ACSD & Health Services websites as well as any informational packages sent to students.

"When I first came, I was already diagnosed with a chronic illness and the transition from my country here alone, it was the first time traveling by myself, and it was very stressful, so I then had experiences of anxiety. First thing, when I asked my family doctor [at Concordia] to write me a note that my condition might cause anxiety and affect my studies, their reply was that they could write the note but they wouldn't recommend it because they wouldn't want my professors to get a bad impression."

Leah

Mental health services

As the majority of the students with disabilities we spoke with are either Neurodivergent and/or have mental health conditions, the topic of the mental health services at Concordia was very prominent. Firstly, students shared many stories that demonstrated that the strict triage structure, hours that conflict with course schedules, and the lack of available practitioners, greatly hinders their ability to get support when they needed it the most:

The 2016 Canadian National College Health Assessment states that 26% of university students "reported having been diagnosed or treated by a professional for one or more mental health conditions in the last 12 months"[16]. However, it's most likely this number is higher given that many still do not report or seek treatment for mental health conditions. In the past five years, the number of post-secondary students with mental health conditions has doubled.[17] However, universities still struggle to support students through adequate resources. To our knowledge, Concordia currently has 10 counselors[18] available for a population of over 45,000 students, with over 11,000 of those potentially struggling with mental health.

"Most of the services are between hours 8 and 4 and then most of your classes are between the hours of 8 and 4 so like actually being able to access services while you're in class, like then you end up missing class, and then you get penalized for missing class, even though it's for accessing the services that support you going to class. Like, as an example would be, like, the triage process for counseling services. How you have to be there in that very specific window to get one of the ten physicians that are available for that day. And then if you don't, you have to come back the next day at the same time to try. And then it's just like, OK, you spent five days trying to access a counselor."

Radish, a white, Queer, Genderqueer, Trans student with disabilities.

Due to the of lack of counselors, long wait times, and the limited amount of psychologists & counselors, students often noted feeling a strong disconnect between the values put forward in mental health awareness-raising campaigns and the actual support they receive:

"I started seeing all the mental health awareness stuff around campus and it's the most hypocritical stuff and it, like, angered me so much, because it's like, oh, we care about mental health, like, what? My experience is totally the opposite. There are not even enough counselors for students."

Special Business

Students also raised concerns regarding the quality of services received. A repetitive negative aspect of students' experiences in Counselling and Psychological Services was accessing psychiatric services. In 2018, over fifty students came forward with testimonies of abusive sessions that were discriminatory, some putting the student's life in danger:

"For years there were people posting about [the psychiatrist] being horrible. Essentially seeing [the psychiatrist] makes you worse."

While we will only touch on this briefly, this incident showed the need for deep reforms regarding how student grievances are handled within Counselling & Psychology and the general need for more accountability on behalf of Concordia.

16 "Mental health and Wellness - Awareness: Did you know?", University of Ottawa, n.d. https://www.uottawa.ca/wellness/about/awareness

17 "Mental Health", Ontario's Universities, n.d. https://ontariosuniversities.ca/issues-priorities/student-supports

18 "Personal counseling", Concordia University, n.d. https://www.concordia.ca/students/counselling/meet-counsellors.html

19 "Preferred name requests", Concordia University, n.d. https://www.concordia.ca/students/preferred-name-requests.html

Other Services – Registrar

Concordia currently offers a "preferred" name service that Trans students use to change their name on their Student ID card, Class lists, Moodle, Exam rosters, and Printed student records.[19] This is a service offered through the Registrar but often students go to the Birks Centre to be referred to make an appointment. In our focus group with trans students, this service was introduced as something that creates a more positive environment for them at Concordia.

"I think that having ... the name that I go by, as the name the professors call me instead of my legal name has helped a lot. Having other students not have access to my dead name has really helped me quite a lot."

Taco, A white, Queer Lesbian, Transgender Woman.

While the preferred name system at Concordia provides immense support to Trans students, there were some challenges that were brought forward that need to be addressed in order to further remove barriers for name changes. One current barrier that Cricket pointed to is that the service is not very visible to students:

In addition, some students mentioned the need to have an appointment within certain operating hours made the service inaccessible to them. We suggest that Concordia explores the option of having an online name change process to reduce barriers for Trans students.

"I didn't really know about the kind of supports that were available to me when I started the program. Like, it took a bit of research to find the preferred name system and that was only because I was looking for it specifically."

Other Services – Le Gym

Concordia's Gym was brought up by several Trans students due to the lack of gender-neutral change rooms. While other universities, such as the University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, University of Alberta, and Ryerson University (to name a few), have clear outlines of what is available in the facilities to create a safer environment for Trans students, Concordia does not. As shown through our conversation with Cricket, the lack of inclusive changing rooms and knowledgeable staff deterred his use of the gym:

"They don't have any sort of gender-neutral changing space here at the gym and I, when I first went to the gym I asked at the desk if they did and they seemed confused and surprised by the question like it wasn't something they were prepared to answer or expected to answer. Although they weren't, like, rude about it or anything, they just didn't seem like it was a question they got asked a lot. So I think that's something that maybe staff there should be, like, aware of at least. And then, but what they did offer is that there's a bathroom on the, like, on the lower floor of the gym. But it's just a toilet and a sink so there's no shower or anything, so ya I ended up not going to the gym"

Cricket

[20] "Gender Identity & Expression", UBC Recreation, The University of British Columbia, n.d. https://recreation.ubc.ca/home-page/inclusive-rec/gender-identity-expression/

[21] "Gender inclusion services for students, staff and faculty", Equity and Human Rights, University of Victoria, n.d. https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/transinclusion/everyone/index.php

[22] "Universal Change Rooms", Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation, University of Alberta, n.d. https://www.ualberta.ca/kinesiology-sport-recreation/facilities/north-campus/access-membership-and-services/universal-change-rooms.html

[23] "Inclusive & Accessible Change Spaces". Recreation, Ryerson University, n.d. https://www.ryerson.ca/recreation/services/Inclusive-accessible-change-spaces/

[24] "Le Gym", Campus Life, Concordia University, n.d. https://www.concordia.ca/campus-life/recreation/facilities/le-gym.html

"The Centre [for Gender Advocacy] to me was huge because it was something that was, it was something at Concordia that wasn't class, right? That wasn't class or a … cafe or a restaurant or anything, it was just, it was just a space, right? It was a space for me to grow in, I guess, ya. And I don't feel like there's enough of, there's not a lot of space to grow in […] this a higher institution, right?"

Chicken Parmesan

"My other big thing is, as well finding out about, or having more visibility for groups like the Centre for Gender Advocacy…I'm in my sixth year and sort of just recently found out about the group. And that is sort of, kind of disappointing for me because I feel like if I had access to this group or if I had known about it earlier maybe I would have started coming out earlier"

Taco

"I took part in the training for peer support at the Centre for Gender Advocacy and it was the first place, it was the first large group of people that I use my pronouns, my they/them pronouns with, and it was really beautiful to have a place that felt safe enough to test that out before bringing it to the whole big world."

Pufferfish

"The Centre for Gender Advocacy, by far, has been vital to me staying at Concordia. They've been, like, a pretty solid rock and support system through like … years of back and forth"

B

However, in addition to facing funding precarity, these groups get little visibility directly through the University, which has made some students unaware that they existed

Barriers in the physical environment

Challenges within Concordia's physical environment came up in our project in many different ways, depending on the experiences and needs of each student. As 60% of our survey respondents, and the majority of the focus group participants, did not have any physical access needs, this section reflects a very broad picture of physical accessibility at Concordia. Physical inaccessibility at Concordia is attended to in more detail in our review of the Student Accessibility policy.

Given our wider scope, it is important to still highlight physical inaccessibility, as it relates specifically to mobility. Both students that do and do not have mobility-related access needs still cited the many Concordia buildings that do not have wheelchair-accessible entrances, such as the Simone de Beauvoir Institute on Bishop street (which we understand will be moving in the near future after many years of student and staff action), and the School of Community & Public Affairs building, along with other annexes on MacKay street in the SGW campus. The VA building was also repeatedly brought up as needing to be renovated, as it does not meet the same standards of other Concordia buildings. As many buildings remain completely inaccessible for people who use mobility aids, physical accessibility specifically must be addressed in future projects in more depth.

Physical Accessibility

When reviewing student's answers regarding the challenges in the physical environment, it was clear that barriers in the physical environment impact students across many different types of disabilities

Some of the main issues regarding physical accessibility that were raised are:

As one example from a Nuerodivegent student shows, often these issues impact student's concentration and ability to engage in their studies, which was common amongst students who cited issues with the physical environment.

"I have a scent sensitivity. I don't know if this is what you're imagining when you describe physical access needs but it would be really lovely if we could have a school policy regarding perfumes and colognes. I get chronic headaches and if someone sits next to me wearing too much perfume. It does inhibit my ability to focus/participate."

A white, Neurodivergent, Queer/Bisexual, Cisgender woman

1 Signage is often confusing and lacks a clear direction.

2 Fluorescent lighting as the only option within classrooms.

3 Lack of attention to reduced scent/scent-free spaces as an access need.

4 Broken automated doors.

5 Long elevator wait-times (especially in the Hall building).

6 Limited gender-neutral accessible bathrooms.

7 Chairs that aggravate chronic pain.

8 Classroom set-up.

9 Lack of standing desks.

10 No permanent desks that are accessible for students with mobility-related disabilities.

11 Lack of space between desks so students who use mobility devices, especially wheelchairs, are not forced to sit at the front of the class

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

According to a 2019 study of over 500 Trans University students in the U.S, proper bathroom facilities is one of the main services that contribute to Trans students "feel[ing] safe and comfortable." To our knowledge, Concordia University has over 100 single-stall washrooms between its' two campuses. However, over the years, Trans students and advocates have highlighted many barriers to accessing these washrooms

Some of the main barriers concerning on-campus gender-neutral washrooms are:

The Concordia website does not hold a map of the gender-neutral washrooms, nor are there signs on campus that students were aware of.

Gender-neutral facilities have recently been locked, and often the key-card access does not work, or the students do not have their student ID with them.

Washrooms are far apart, causing students to be late for classes.

Students rely on gender-neutral facilities in buildings that close earlier than their classes finish (i.e. The Hive Cafe and the Centre for Gender Advocacy)

Currently, the process to obtain a key to some washrooms is confusing and requires students either going to the ACSD or Security. Both situations will often require a Trans student to out themselves to staff.

[25] Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, "More Than Just Bathrooms," Insider Higher ED, July 25, 2018, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/07/25/study-bathrooms-gender-identity-protection-policies-most-important-transgender

[26] Alex Hutchins, "Slice of Life: Peeing in Peace," The Concordian, September 25, 2018, http://theconcordian.com/2018/09/issue-5-slice-of-life-peeing-in-peace/

[27] Brayden Jagger Haines, "Occupied! Not Enough Gender-Neutral Washrooms on Montreal Campuses: Advocates," Global News, February 2, 2017, https://globalnews.ca/news/3207021/occupied-not-enough-gender-neutral-washrooms-on-montreal-campuses-advocates/

[28] "Inclusive Signage and All Gender Washrooms", Equity and Community Inclusion, Ryerson University, n.d. https://www.ryerson.ca/equity/resources/inclusive-signage-all-gender-washrooms/

[29] "Inclusive Washrooms" Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion, University of Waterloo, n.d. https://uwaterloo.ca/human-rights-equity-inclusion/resources/inclusive-washrooms

[30] "Gender-Inclusive Washrooms", Equity at McGill, McGill University, n.d. https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/resources/gender-sexuality/gender-inclusive-washrooms

Unlike other universities, Concordia does not have a map of the gender-neutral washrooms available on its website. The only map of this nature is accessible through the Centre for Gender Advocacy and was created in collaboration with students and the support of the Concordia Student Union in 2016. However, has not been adopted nor updated by the University. As the location of these washrooms is not advertised through the University's channels, this has led to students having difficulty locating them.

Within our focus groups and interviews with Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender DIverse students, bathroom access was one of their main concerns brought forward. One of the issues reported being that many of these washrooms now require keycard access (through the use of their student ID, which often does not work), or sometimes access through security or the ACSD.

River & Huakun gave us more insight on this issue within their interviews:

"When they [security] see someone and … they read you as someone who's non-disabled, they immediately read you as trans and I don't need that. So, the fact that we have washrooms that are just single stall individualized washrooms and they almost all have a key. That's crazy. Cause, then, mind you, security doesn't just hand you the key, they go with you to unlock the door. They stand there and wait for you and then they leave like that's crazy. I don't know who's idea that was to add individualized washrooms and have security, basically, escort you to the washroom wait for you to come out, then like lock it back…That's wild that you have to get, go find a security person to pee."

Huakun

"I've been trying to ask or look or find, you know like non-gendered bathrooms or like universal access bathrooms. And nope! I know there are some but you need the card and honestly, I didn't have enough energy … to go to the access office thing in the Hall building and explained my situation and ask for that"

River

The process of having to seek permission to gain washroom access is deeply troubling. As the above examples illustrate, having locked gender-neutral washrooms is creating situations where students are forced into a position of being "assumed" to be Trans (if they are not "visibly" disabled), or having to out themselves to provide a reason to access a washroom.

Furthermore, as many of these washrooms are inaccessible to Trans students without extra steps taken, students reported often being late for classes and again forced into the position of either having to disclose the reason to a professor or face penalties. We know anecdotally because of this, Trans students pick or drop classes based on its distance to a gender-neutral washroom.

It is important to acknowledge within this conversation that because gender-neutral washrooms at Concordia are also "universally" accessible washrooms, key access can ensure that mobility device users have priority. We understand this as a priority and while this is a complex issue, it must be resolved in other ways that do not create further barriers for Trans students.

[31] Concordia University. Report of the Advisory Group on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. PDF file. (September 30, 2019), p. 8, https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/concordia/offices/provost/docs/Report-Advisory-Group-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion.pdf

[31] Ibid

[32] Ibid

[33] Concordia. EDI Report, p. 9

[34] Ibid

[35] Ibid

[36] Concordia. EDI Report, p. 10

[37] Ibid

[38] Concordia. EDI Report, p. 11

[39] Ibid

Current Concordia EDI work

On September 30th, 2019, Concordia released its Report of the Advisory Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. As our project focuses on the experiences of LGBTQ2S+ Students, Students with Disabilities, some of our findings do overlap. This overlap further reinforces and confirms that below areas are priorities for the University to address.

Priorities and issues identified by both reports include:

The benefit of the use of a preferred name system [31]

The benefit of student fee levy groups, especially for marginalized students.[32]

There is a general lack of meaningful direction or policies for staff on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion[33]

That the University is "reactive rather than proactive in supporting diverse groups across campus"[34]

A need for intentionality regarding the hiring of people with disabilities, People of Colour, and Indigenous faculty and staff.[35]

The need to apply Universal Design principles across campus.[36]

Requests for mandatory training for staff and faculty.[37]

That "people have been hurt and there needs to be recognition that we have not always supported the diverse members of our community."[38]

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

However, as our project demonstrated, being unable to access the many gender-neutral washrooms at Concordia is a main barrier faced by Trans students. Therefore, this cannot be used as a meaningful measure of EDI practices. It is one thing to have gender-neutral washrooms on campus and another for them to be visible, accessible, and meet the demands of those who need them.

Another prominent difference in our findings is how "addressing pronouns" within the classroom environment is currently highlighted as a "positive" focal point within the EDI report. However, as we have shown, pronouns are rarely respected, contributing to Trans students navigating an environment that leaves them feeling "unseen" and unwelcomed by professors, staff, and peers. We would agree that, when it happens, this is a positive experience. However, without the EDI report highlighting the barriers to pronoun usage, solely stating it is a positive experience, erases the need for this to be addressed.

"The ethnographic listening and observation identified EDI as being reflected on campus, with posters on student elections, gender-neutral bathrooms at different locations, and gathering spaces on the downtown campuses."[40]

As we have illustrated, Students of Colour currently face high rates of race and ethnicity-based discrimination within the classroom environment. However, within Concordia's EDI report, race was mainly attended when addressing barriers within the hiring process, and it was done so in a broad inclusion of many marginalized groups:

"There needs to be more people of colour and other underrepresented groups on the staff and faculty at Concordia. The community called for the need to be intentional about hiring a diverse workforce; specifically, persons of colour, individuals with disabilities and Indigenous staff and faculty were mentioned as needing more attention in our hiring approaches."[42]

44 Graham Carr, "There Is Much More to Do to Create a More Just Society and Brighter Future for All through Education," Concordia University News, June 3, 2020, archived.

45 Appendix 1

46 Curtis Carmichael, "Justice Is Not Some of Our Work but All of Our Work," Together We Are (blog) (Queen's University, April 24, 2019), https://www.queensu.ca/connect/equity/2019/04/24/justice-is-not-some-of-our-work-but-all-of-our-work/

Redeveloping hiring structures is imperative, especially across intersecting lines of race, gender, disability, and sexuality. However, nowhere in the report is racism, in any manifestation (i.e. everyday racism, structural racism etc.) named or addressed. This exclusion of racism from EDI work and equity frameworks within Universities is not uncommon but must be corrected to make room for the deeper work that can change the institutional structures that create the current climate.

This lack of focus on race and racism on campus is further illustrated by how the community responded to an inadequate statement from Concordia that outlined their position on "systemic racism and diversity."[44] Within days of the University's statement, an open letter that obtained more than 4,000 signatures by June 10th 2020, was launched aiming "to eliminate anti-Black racism at Concordia University and move toward a pedagogy grounded in racial justice."[45] While the letter is attached to this report as Appendix 1 and must be read in full, one of the main points raised in the institution's lack of follow-up concerning the demand for a Black studies program that dates back to the 1960s alongside the recent rejection of a renewed proposal. Overall, the letter addresses Concordia's long history of not proactively addressing racism (specifically anti-Black racism) and representation on campus.

We would like to close this section with a reflection on the need for more nuanced and anti-racist EDI processes from Curtis Carmichael, a Queen University alumnus and educator:

"The first step toward change is to name the ongoing oppression, colonization, and marginalization for what it is. We must name and understand systemic white supremacy, a system based on economic exploitation and structural exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) by limiting their access to opportunities and resources … Encouraging and promoting diversity does not do justice to diverse communities if systems are not put in place for them to thrive … EDI has become popular and trendy in western discourses but it is not able to identify and remove the systemic barriers that were historically designed to exclude and further marginalize BIPOC communities. Specifically, we must move from EDI towards an anti-oppression and anti-racism framework … By using these frameworks, the barriers and processes that continue to perpetuate marginalization can be identified and removed.[46]

Moving Forward

We end this report with recommendations to Concordia University that come directly from LGBTQ2S+ and Disabled students and respond very much to the barriers that we have covered in this project. These recommendations are not exhaustive as this work is always evolving and needs to prioritize the directives coming from marginalized students, staff, and faculty. These are meant to be used alongside the helpful strategies within this report.

Furthermore, we highly encourage Concordia University to also incorporate recommendations from other sources, one being the C2C Two Spirit & Queer People of Colour Call to Conversation with LGBT & Allies from the University of Winnipeg. Among their calls to action, the report includes 13 recommendations for Educational Institutions that "highlight ongoing discrimination and marginalization based on gender identity, racialization, and/or sexuality" and offers ways for these issues to be addressed.[47]

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[47] C2C: Two Spirit & Queer People of Colour Call to Conversation with LGBT & Allies. (The University of Winnipeg, Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc. and Queer & Trans People of Colour Winnipeg, 2019), page 4, https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/c2c/docs/c2c_calls-to-action_final.pdf.

Mapping Project Recommendations

1 Establish a permanent community-based steering committee for EDI work that attends to issues of race, gender, and sexuality on campus. It is required that this is paid work that prioritizes QTBIPOC students, staff, and faculty.

2 Develop welcoming kits to be included in onboarding processes for all Concordia staff and faculty that educate on how to create welcoming, respectful environments for Students of Colour, Disabled Students, and Queer & Trans Students. This should address the specific barriers raised within this report.

3 Establish a permanent community-based steering committee for EDI work that attends to accessibility issues on campus. It is required that this is paid work that prioritizes Disabled students, staff, and faculty of color.

4 Establish a budget for student initiatives for Trans, LGBTQ2S+, and QTBIPOC students that is funded by the University administration, with the control of the initiatives kept in the hands of students.

5 Establish a budget for student initiatives for Disabled students that are funded by the University administration, with the control of the initiatives kept in the hands of students.

6 Establish a curriculum review committee of Concordia community members with lived experience and, when applicable, research experience, to review how race, gender, disability, and sexuality can be better addressed across disciplines.

7 Review with community members and experts, how to meaningfully create mandatory training for staff and faculty on the following topics (preferably by members of communities impacted by these issues):

7.1 Anti-racism & facilitating conversations on oppression within the classroom.

7.1.1 Comprehensive Anti-racist pedagogies.

7.1.2 How to review curriculum for analysis on race, gender, sexuality, and disability.

7.1.3 Ways to respectfully facilitate classroom difficult discussions while recognizing that students with intersecting identities and experiences that connect to the discussion are in the classroom.

7.1.4   Avoiding the use of 'devil's advocate' as a pedagogical tool.

7.1.5   Learning how to center marginalized students' experiences, without calling on them to represent 'the community'.

7.1.6   Learning from and listening to student feedback.

7.2   Neurodivergence & Mental Health

7.2.1   Adapting pedagogical tools such as rubrics, courses, and expectations in a transparent fashion that does not create further barriers for students.

7.2.2   Being flexible and empathetic surrounding different learning needs.

7.2.3   Adaptive tools and software are available at Concordia.

7.2.4   How to respond to disclosures of disability.

7.2.5   How to adapt course content and deadlines to create further accessibility within the classroom for all students.

7.3   Trans experiences

7.3.1   How anti-racism plays an imperative part in disrupting transphobia.

7.3.2   How to use gender-neutral pronouns.

7.3.3   How to apologize when misgendering someone.

7.3.4   Trans related resources on and off-campus.

7.3.5   Recognizing & disrupting transphobia in the classroom.

7.3.6   Where gender-neutral washrooms are located and how they are accessed.

8   Through policy (see our Accessibility Policy Review), create a unified list of the specific responsibilities professors have to maintain accessible classrooms for Neurodiverse students.

9   Implement more robust anti-racist and anti-transphobic policies that include accountability mechanisms that are transparent and grounded in the needs of the Concordia LGBTQ2S & BIPOC communities.

10 Establish a permanent map of the gender-neutral & accessible washrooms on campus and immediately unlock and remove the requirement for students to use keycards while ensuring the needs of students who use mobility devices are also prioritized.

11 Conduct an accessibility audit of current service websites to ensure they meet standards within Universal Design, and more clearly outlined bureaucratic processes for students.

12 Create more bursary opportunities for students that do not rely upon a high GPA (e.g. above 3.0), as well as more funding opportunities that are specifically for BIPOC, Disabled Students, QTBIPOC, and LGBTQ2S+ students.

13 Create streamlined ways for LGBTQ2S and Disabled students to find resources that meet their needs on campus and include these in a welcome package to students. This should include but is not limited to:

13.1 An online resource hub that provides lists of services that are available to students and how to access them.

13.2 Clarity on which doctors within Health Services have been trained in trans-affirmative care and what services they provide.

13.3   Clarity on which counselors and mental health practitioners are aware or have been trained in trans-affirmative care and what services they provide.

13.4   A clearer process for reporting racism, homophobia, and transphobia, and outlined expectations on the step-by-step process that the University takes to address them, what possible outcomes are, and if there are any limitations. Ensure these are transparent and hold the university accountable to certain timeframes and conduct.

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Appendix 1

Concordia statement on Black Lives

Dr. Graham Carr, President

Dr. Anne Whitelaw, Interim Provost

Dr. André Roy, Dean of Arts and Science

Dr. Rebecca Duclos, Dean of Fine Arts

Dr. Mourad Debbabi, Interim Dean of Gina Cody School of Engineering
and Computer Science

Dr. Anne-Marie Croteau, Dean of John Molson School of Business

Dr. Effrosyni Diamantoudi, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Guylaine Beaudry, University Librarian

Dr. Lisa Ostiguy, Special Advisor to the Provost on Campus Life

Dr. Nadia Hardy, Interim Deputy Provost and Vice-Provost,
Faculty Development and Inclusion

Dr. Nadia Bhuiyan, Vice-Provost, Partnerships and Experiential Learning

Dr. Sandra Gabriele, Vice-Provost, Innovation in Teaching and Learning

Dr. Paula Wood-Adams, Vice-Provost Research and Graduate Studies

Ian Rakita, Concordia University Faculty Association President

Robert Soroka, Concordia University Part-Time Faculty Association President

June 9, 2020

Dear Concordia leaders and community members,

We are a group of Concordia University professors, lecturers, librarians, students, staff, and alumni. We are writing to communicate our solidarity and support of Black activists in the United States, here in Canada, and around the world, as they fight to eliminate police racism and violence, as well as systemic and interpersonal anti-Black racism in general. We extend our support for these activists by taking direction from them, as we believe that Black communities best understand the systemic oppression they face and the best ways to oppose it. We also support the calls of Black activists in the US, Montreal, and around the world to de-fund the police and reinvest these funds in services and initiatives that actually benefit Black communities.

The global uprising sparked by the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department is a historic event. Starting in Minneapolis on May 25, creative and broad-based protests have spread to all fifty US states, as well as 36 countries worldwide. In Canada, protests have erupted in dozens of cities, highlighting the recent police killings of Regis Korchinski-Paquet and Chantel Moore, as well as a longer history of police killings, racial profiling, and racist violence against Black and Indigenous people.

As the protests make clear, police killings of Black people are not isolated events. They are a recurring outcome of police institutions oriented toward racial terror and premature death. Policing, moreover, is just one element of a broader system of white supremacy and racial violence that dates back centuries and has intensified in the past decade. The protests are indeed inseparable from a terrifying broader context that includes the rise of far-right movements, the election of far-right leaders, and the disproportionate health and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Black communities.

For much of the public, the recent protests have brought new visibility to the extent and depth of police racism and violence in our cities, and the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism throughout society. For Black people, in contrast, these realities have always been well known and have been resisted, individually and collectively, for centuries.

At the same time that we express our solidarity with Black activists around the world, we believe it is important to organize against anti-Black racism where we are situated and where we have the greatest ability to effect change. Ending anti-Black racism requires more than ending police violence. It requires broad-based systemic and institutional change across all sectors of society, including education. As such, we have developed a series of demands, which aim to eliminate anti-Black racism at Concordia University and move toward a pedagogy grounded in racial justice. Our demands are as follows:

1. We call for Concordia to minimize its recourse to the Montreal Police department (SPVM) and re-assess how to address the needs of people in crisis and work with community partners to prevent and address violence on campus. Anti-Black policing has deep roots in Montreal, dating back to the earliest days of this city. In the last fifty years, the SPVM has taken dozens of Black lives and disproportionately profiled, arrested, and harmed Black Montrealers. Given this reality, Concordia's present security relationship with the SPVM must be examined and significantly revised. To achieve this, we call for the creation of a task force with the mandate to introduce new protocols for Concordia security that minimize reliance on the police and ensure a safe campus for the Black community. The task force should also work with members of other communities disproportionately targeted by police, including Indigenous people. Black members of this task force, as well as other members representing disproportionately targeted groups, must be compensated for their time, or given time off from their usual duties, to participate.

2. We call for immediate commitments to Black Studies at Concordia, including the following:

a. A commitment to hiring six Black tenure-track faculty members who are trained in Black Studies or otherwise centre Black life in their research over the next five years. The demand for a Black Studies program at Concordia dates back to the 1960s, and has gathered increasingly widespread support in the last five years. A draft proposal to create a Black Studies program, which included faculty hiring commitments, was rejected in 2018 due to the present lack of Black faculty at Concordia trained in this field. To move past this chicken-and-egg problem, we call for the creation of an endowed chair in Black Studies within the next twelve months. We also call for the hiring

of five more tenure-track Black faculty members, who are trained in Black Studies or centre Black life in their research, over the next five years. While the humanities and social sciences are the most obvious places for such hires, we encourage consideration of hires in STEM and fine art disciplines as well. There is precedence for this in other Canadian institutions, such as OCADU, Queen's, York, and McGill, which have each hired 4-5 Black Studies faculty members in the last two years.

b. We call for the creation of a task force to oversee the development of a Black Studies program and expand Black Studies teaching at Concordia. The task force will involve faculty and students from across disciplines and faculties. The work of the task force will be to design the Black Studies curriculum, identify existing courses where Black Studies material could be integrated, develop a plan to expand Black Studies teaching across the university (inside and outside the Black Studies program), and develop a policy to ensure a wide roster of courses either focused on, or relevant to, Black Studies is available to meet the growing demand of Concordia's student community.

3. We call for action to address the hostile culture and oppressive environments that reproduce anti-Black racism on our campus. For decades, Black students have highlighted the racism they face in Concordia classrooms. Examples include hearing other students or the professor use the N-word, being asked to speak on behalf of "their people," having faculty encourage the exploration of racist ideas as "thought experiments" in courses, dismissing and/or failing to recognize the contributions made by Black students to the classroom and in their assignments and research, and omitting the work of Black scholars to disciplinary histories and course syllabi. In this oppressive context, Black faculty, lecturers, and staff are asked to play an informal and uncompensated counseling role for Black students. To address these problems, we call for an investment in mental health and counseling services, geared toward Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour students. We also call for the informal counseling provided by BIPOC faculty members to be recognized as a component of their required university service. More broadly, we call for proactive investments in antiracist education and resources for Concordia faculty, administrators, governors, and employees. Finally, we call for a review of the role of the Ombuds Office in addressing complaints of

racism within the Concordia community and the development of a policy to deal with cases where faculty members have promoted, allowed, or mishandled racist comments in their classes. These measures, together, are a necessary companion to the hiring of Black professors and the development of Black Studies. For Concordia to move beyond structures and philosophies of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and colonial racism, it must create changes in the content of teaching and research, but also address the oppressive environment in which teaching and research occurs.

4. We call for a commitment to funding Black research at Concordia, including the creation of $250,000 in new scholarships for Black students and other measures. Black scholars and research with Black communities are chronically underfunded across Canadian institutions, and especially so at Concordia. Research on Black communities is rarely community-led, which means scholarship seldom benefits the very communities that research is conducted on. To address this, we call for the creation of $250,000 in new scholarships for Black undergraduate and graduate students, new research grants geared toward Black undergraduate and graduate students, and the creation of a pre-doctoral fellowship in Black Studies for Black scholars doing transformative work. We also call for a commitment to promoting and disseminating Black scholarship in and beyond the university through the funding of a lecture series, through public relations activities across various university departments (e.g., the library, archives, alumni relations, admissions and recruitment), and through other means. We call, finally, for a permanent centre for Black research at Concordia. The Black Perspectives Initiative (BPI), created in 2019, has begun this work. The mission of the BPI is to connect and support Black scholarship and research at Concordia and within Montreal's Black communities. We call for expanded and permanent funding for this initiative, including transforming the current part-time coordinator position into a full-time permanent position, providing a permanent space, and creating an account for project funding. We call for the coordinator of the BPI to work with the Black Studies task force to determine how the BPI can serve as a hub for the Black Studies program (as the latter will not be a department) and help to allocate the aforementioned scholarships and research grants for Black students.

5. We call for a commitment across the university to ensure that financial resources and employment represent the racial diversity of the Montreal population. To achieve this goal, the university must bring together the various actors that shape fundraising and hiring practices to the detriment of Black people. The persistence of anti-Black racism and the lack of Black representation at Concordia cannot be addressed through the actions of the university administration alone. The work of University Advancement determines whether money is available for Black scholarships and research, and whether programs like Black Studies and projects like the BPI are supported. The policies and practices of unions like the Concordia University Faculty Association (CUFA) and Concordia University Part-Time Faculty Association (CUPFA) shape hiring practices and the possibilities for prioritizing the hiring of people from underrepresented groups. Various actors have stood in the way of the university generating accurate data on the racial backgrounds of faculty members and other employees and, thus, identifying problems of representation. To address this, we call for the creation of a task force that brings together Black members of the Concordia community with members of the unions, University Advancement, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office. The mandate of the task force will be to examine current structures and practices and institute changes that expand fundraising for Black programs, increase the hiring of Black candidates for jobs across the university, and rapidly move toward a distribution of financial resources and employment that reflects the diversity of the Montreal population.

6. We call for the DB Clarke Theatre in the Hall building to be renamed the Coralee Hutchison Theatre. DB Clarke was the Principal of Sir George Williams University during the 1969 Computer Centre Occupation, in which Black students and their allies fought for action on institutional racism at the university. DB Clarke, rather than accepting the students' demands, called on the Montreal police on the 13th day of the occupation, prompting an attack on the students that led to the death of Coralee Hutchison, a Black student at the university. DB Clarke's name has no place in a university that purportedly welcomes Black students and faculty, while Coralee Hutchison's name stands for the role that Black students have played in making Sir George Williams, and now Concordia, a better place. Along with this name change, we call for a rewriting of the institutional history of the Computer Centre Occupation, including removing the present neutral language in that history, which fails to acknowledge the university's role in the violence. While these measures will only partially address the acknowledged need to recognize and

redress the violence that is part of the social and institutional history of Concordia, it will send a clear message to Concordia's Black community that the university recognizes this need and commits to engaging on that path.

7. We call for the university's commitments to meeting these demands to be communicated in a public statement from President Graham Carr. Dr. Carr's statement on June 4th regarding the global uprising against police violence does not do justice to the university's responsibilities. While it expresses support for Black activists in North America, it makes no new commitments to addressing anti-Black racism at Concordia, and mentions a series of existing commitments, including EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), which involve no specific goals to expand Black employment or address anti-Black racism at Concordia. We appreciate Dr. Carr mentioning the legacy of Black students at Concordia, including the 1969 Computer Centre Occupation. The reality, however, is that the university itself responded violently to this political action, never apologized for the violence, and never met the demands the students made - demands which included the creation of a Black Studies program. It is time for Concordia to genuinely honour this legacy by addressing the longstanding demands of Black students, faculty, lecturers, librarians, and staff. More than this, it is time for Concordia to assume its role in the development of a pedagogical project that moves beyond the structures and philosophies of white supremacy, systemic anti-Black racism, and colonial racism and moves toward a context of social and cultural justice, equality, and reparation.