



Sustainability Policy

Graduate Students' Association
of
Concordia University

Last Modification:
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Article I - Vision

1. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) envisions being an active leader of sustainability within Concordia and beyond it. The GSA strives towards reducing our human impact on the environment, improving the wellbeing of our communities, and ensuring the access of our communities to needed resources.

Article II - Scope

1. This sustainability policy provides a set of rules and guidelines that ensure that the GSA continuously explores, promotes, and implements sustainability initiatives and ideas on the internal, external, and academic levels. The sustainability policy should be a living document, used in tandem with the Concordia University Sustainability Policy.

Article III - Definition

1. The GSA endorses a definition of sustainability that means meeting our own current needs without hindering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
2. The GSA views sustainability as the outcome of the balanced intersection between its three key, and inseparable, pillars:
 - 2.1. the environment;
 - 2.2. society;
 - 2.3. the economy.
3. The GSA recognizes that the application of sustainability at Concordia University entails approaches, processes, and actions that address environmental, social, and economic issues holistically and concurrently.

Article IV - Commitments

1. The GSA commits to incorporate sustainability as a core value in its strategic planning, commitments, actions and communications: including external, internal, academic, and advocacy initiatives, activities, and events. Such incorporation requires considering a long-term perspective, recognizing resource capacities, and balancing the interconnected nature of our environment, society and economy.
2. The GSA also commits to meeting and recognizing the needs of current graduate students, without compromising the needs of future graduate students.

3. External Commitments

- 3.1. The GSA shall promote and implement sustainable practices through its university external representation;
- 3.2. The GSA will actively take part in sustainability initiatives led by Concordia University.
- 3.3. The GSA shall initiate and maintain collaborations with student groups, associations and projects, which are actively engaged in sustainability. These collaborations could aim to advance, promote and implement sustainability initiatives at the GSA, Concordia University or the community at large.
- 3.4. The GSA is committed to supporting sustainability initiatives, projects or research that is led by graduate students when they are in alignment with the mission and vision detailed in this policy. The forms of support provided could include:
 - 3.4.1. Financial support – within existing funding program or through approval from council
 - 3.4.2. Outreach/communication support – through digital, social media or other communication channels.
 - 3.4.3. Internal support – through seeking new opportunities for collaboration and funding, from entities internal to Concordia University.
 - 3.4.4. External support – through seeking new opportunities for collaboration and funding, from entities external to Concordia University.
- 3.5. The sustainability practices of external entities (companies, associations, community groups) should be taken into consideration by the GSA before engaging with them.

4. Internal Commitments

- 4.1. The GSA will respect and protect the rights and freedoms of its staff, executives, and all its members.
- 4.2. The GSA will seek to provide an accessible environment to all of its members including those with disabilities.
- 4.3. The GSA will provide a safe space for members of all ethnicity, genders, sexual orientation, and religions in the GSA house, and its events. A safe space is a place in which a person or group of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.
- 4.4. The GSA will ensure that all the volunteers taking part in GSA events will be recognized through the Concordia Co-Curricular Record including all representation.
- 4.5. The GSA house will have, at all times, at least one bin for paper recycling, one bin for metal and plastic recycling, and one bin for compost

- 4.6. The GSA will buy and use recycled printing paper.
- 4.7. The GSA will endeavor to source all other office and event supplies from local, fair-trade, and environmentally responsible sources.
- 4.8. When organizing events, the GSA will adhere to the EH&S (Environment Health and Safety) guidelines for sustainable events:
 - 4.8.1. Ensure food is healthy, fair-trade, organic, and locally sourced, or preferably student-sourced whenever possible (examples of student-led food providers include, but are not limited to, the Hive, City Farm School, People's Potato, Campus Potager, Season Jars, or the Frigo Vert).
 - 4.8.2. Ensure the availability of all needed waste infrastructure and ensure the proper waste triaging for paper, plastic and metal, and compost.
 - 4.8.3. Eliminate the use of bottled or pre-packaged water, and the use of single-packaged drinks.
 - 4.8.4. Minimize the use of materials, reduce the use of plastics and completely eliminate Styrofoam at all events.
 - 4.8.5. Use reusable materials (Concordia Dish Project provides reusable plates, consider compostable plates, minimize packaging, etc.). If not possible, prioritize the use of compostable and/or biodegradable materials.
 - 4.8.6. Ensure the accessibility of the location of the event.

5. Academic & Advocacy Commitments

- 5.1. The GSA will lead initiatives that encourage its affiliated student associations to adopt sustainability as a core value of its strategic planning, commitments, actions and communications.
- 5.2. The GSA will seek to actively collaborate with other organizations, on campus and beyond, in order to incorporate sustainability in graduate classrooms, in graduate curricula, and graduate research.
- 5.3. Ensure that sustainability awareness is included within orientation events for graduate students, and to council of directors training.
- 5.4. The GSA will seek to encourage its membership, from all faculties, to adopt sustainability in their academic, student and community work and will recognize those who do so.

Article V - Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

1. Structure

- 1.1. The Sustainability Committee is an open committee whose meetings are announced to all GSA members in the newsletter;
- 1.2. It will be composed of:
 - 1.2.1. VP Internal

- 1.2.2. VP Academic & Advocacy
- 1.2.3. VP External
- 1.2.4. a minimum of two councilors
- 1.2.5. one GSA staff member.
- 1.2.6. The committee chair will be voted upon during the first meeting.
- 1.3. The committee meets once a month, and quorum is composed of 2 executives and 2 directors.
- 1.4. Only the permanent members of the committee have voting rights.

2. Roles

- 2.1. It is the role of the committee to provide the council of directors with an action plan for the year to be approved in the August council of directors meeting. The action plan should:
 - 2.1.1. Be aligned with the university's directions as well as the GSA's vision.
 - 2.1.2. Include clear action points with clear targets, measurable goals, and clear time frames.
 - 2.1.3. Indicate all the required resources (financial, human or other) for each of the action points.
 - 2.1.4. Indicate a proposed budget for sustainability to be approved by the council of directors.
- 2.2. Every semester (fall, winter and summer), the committee should present a status report to the council.
- 2.3. The committee will provide suggestions for student representation on student organization and university committees and/or boards relating to sustainability.
- 2.4. It is the role of the committee to review and provide recommendation for council regarding the feasibility of collaboration and support for ongoing and/or new sustainability initiatives, projects or research presented to the origination.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. VP External will be responsible for the above mentioned external commitments.
- 3.2. VP Internal will be responsible for the above mentioned internal commitments.
- 3.3. VP Academic & Advocacy will be responsible for the above mentioned academic and advocacy commitments.
- 3.4. The progress of all the VPs on sustainability related items should be reported to the committee on a monthly basis.

Article VI - Policy Review

1. This policy should be reviewed for necessary changes by the Sustainability Committee every year. The policy should be updated to ensure the adoption of best practices and inclusion of new sustainability related initiatives in Concordia and in the surrounding community.
2. Any changes are to be approved by the policy committee in order to be ratified, along with the action plan, during the August council of directors meeting.