

Concordia's Faculty of Arts and Science reflects on year one of its Five Commitments

The shared values are coming to life across disciplines, including student- and faculty-led initiatives

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Students from the Department of Applied Human Sciences and Lecturer Annick Davignon participate in a student-led walk, reflecting on the Faculty's Five Commitments and their place in campus life.

This month marks one year since Concordia's Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) launched its Five Commitments, meant to inspire how students, faculty and staff "teach, research, collaborate and engage with the world."

Known as the "5Cs," the initiative emerged from a series of Faculty-wide discussions exploring the Faculty's

approach to academic work and the ways in which members can realize their shared values across a wide range of disciplines.

Since launching in June 2025, the 5Cs have evolved against a backdrop of ongoing challenges, including the aftermath of the pandemic and broad shifts in higher education.

“Our identity is shaped through ongoing dialogue, collaboration and shared effort. It is a collective process that continues to evolve as we add new voices, perspectives and experiences,” says [Pascale Sicotte](#), Faculty dean.

“From the beginning, we never saw these commitments as something fixed or final. What matters most is how we work together to bring them to life.”

A relational approach

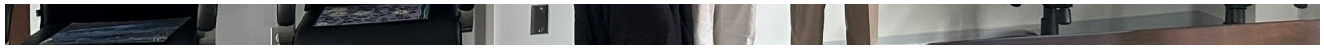
The 5Cs were shaped by brainstorming sessions at academic retreats, unit-level conversations and wider reflections tied to research and teaching initiatives.

Part of the initial drafting process was also influenced by a collaboration with [Jennifer Leason](#) (Anishinaabekwe, Pine Creek), an artist and scholar, and Ka’nahsohon Kevin Deer, Kanien’kehá:ka Knowledge Keeper.

Through circle-based dialogues and visual storytelling exercises with Leason and Deer, the dean’s leadership team explored the Faculty’s current state, including its strengths, challenges and aspirations. Leason later created four artworks to reflect these conversations, now displayed in the dean’s office on the third floor of the [AD building](#).

The set of themes that emerged formed the basis of the 5Cs, grounding them in relational approaches to knowledge and community.





Artist and scholar Jennifer Leason (left), Kanien'kehá:ka Knowledge Keeper Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer (right) and Dean Pascale Sicotte (centre) with the four artworks inspired by the conversations that shaped the Faculty's Five Commitments.

Faculty make the 5Cs their own

The 5Cs have not only built a shared narrative about the Faculty's role and direction — they have also served to reconnect the Faculty's 27 departments and colleges, Sicotte says.

"Faculty members often describe the commitments through the lens of their own disciplines, experiences and priorities, yet common themes have emerged: authenticity, shared responsibility and engagement," she explains.

"Some see the 5Cs as creating space for knowledge rooted in lived experience and community connections, while others view them as a reaffirmation of interdisciplinary collaboration and diverse perspectives."

While interpretations of the 5Cs vary, Sicotte says the values that underpin them have transcended disciplines, allowing Faculty members to make the commitments their own through concrete actions.

Examples include:

- courses that explore relationships to the St. Lawrence River and other bodies of water from historical, cultural and environmental perspectives;
- new academic offerings such as the Black and African Diaspora Studies in the Canadian Context programs and the Science first-year experience (SFYX) course;
- initiatives such as the Indigenous Garden at the Loyola Campus and the signature of the Green Chemistry Commitment, and;
- an ad-hoc interdisciplinary group to support curriculum development and innovation in the Faculty

For Jarrett Carty, principal of the Liberal Arts College, the 5Cs have encouraged the unit to "double down" on its efforts to "bring Quebec to the world and the world to Quebec" — one of the commitments outlined in the 5Cs.

The College reinvigorated alumni connections, helping model the opportunities made possible

by a degree while connecting current students to the global Concordia community. It also recently launched an annual student trip to Quebec City, designed to build community within the unit and introduce students to “the riches of Quebec history and culture.”

Sicotte explains that the 5Cs process have made it easier to connect work across departments and recognize common ground where it might not have been as visible before.

“As new initiatives emerge and others evolve, the Faculty’s identity is shaped and reshaped, through the contributions of those who teach, learn and work within it,” she says.

Student voices matter

Alongside each unit's interpretation, the past year has also seen more structured efforts to integrate the commitments into teaching practices and the student experience.

Graduate courses within the [Department of Applied Human Sciences](#) gave students the opportunity to apply the commitments to a real-world project in partnership with the Faculty. In fall 2025, students in the MA in [Human Systems Intervention](#) program used the 5Cs as a framework for analysis and proposal development.

A similar exercise in the winter 2026 course [Organizational Development II \(AHSC 425\)](#) allowed students to explore how to engage their peers on campus in advancing the commitments and to examine how they are already being embodied across the FAS community.

The two courses led to more informal initiatives, such as student-led walks on both campuses, which generated visual and written reflections on the 5Cs. These materials offer insight into how students perceive the Faculty’s values and connect them to day-to-day academic life.

“Not only did the 5Cs provide an authentic learning experience, they also invite students into the work itself, offering their perspectives, creativity and critical insight to help bring these commitments to life in meaningful ways,” explains [Rosemary Reilly](#), professor and chair of the Department of Applied Human Sciences.

“The 5Cs have created a space for students to feel that their voices matter.”

Sicotte says projects like these embody the spirit of the initiative, in which students are invited to become co-creators, rather than observers.

“Our goal is to foster connections through dialogue and collaboration, act with purpose to

strengthen the student experience, and make space for curiosity, experimentation and diverse perspectives," she says.

Shaping what comes next

Sicotte notes that, in 2025, department chairs and principals involved in the year-long creation process shared a collective "moment of confidence" when the leadership team agreed it was finally time to release the 5Cs.

In retrospect, she says, the launch marked "a time of togetherness that is paving the way for the hard work needed now."

"In times of crisis it is critical that we all pull together," adds [Peter Pawelek](#), professor and chair of the [Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry](#). "As chair, this means not only serving the immediate needs of one's unit but also acting collaboratively beyond one's unit for the greater good of the institution.

"It is only through committed collective action that we'll be able to maintain our academic independence," he says. "This sort of collective action draws us closer as a community and fosters a deeper interdisciplinarity that will only make us stronger."

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