

Report

DIGITAL STRATEGY PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Group Discussions, Individual
Interviews and Creative Workshops
with Students, Staff and Faculty



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CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

CONTEXT

Universities are going through an important period of transformation. The digital environment is at the forefront of that transformation. How the community learns, how it teaches, how it creates and disseminates knowledge is changing at a rapid pace.

Concordia University aims to be at the forefront of that transformation. It wants to provide a digital environment that better fits the needs, experiences and aspirations of its community. It has the opportunity to turn its digital strategy into a distinctive and strategic advantage.

OBJECTIVES

Public consultations with the community were organized to instruct Concordia University's future digital strategy. Consultations involved students, staff as well as faculty. Specifically, the objectives of the public consultations were:

- Understanding the **main challenges** that the community deals with in its experience at Concordia University.
 - Understanding **how the community currently uses technology and the digital environment**, whether technology directly provided by Concordia University or not.
 - Evaluating the community's **satisfaction with the current digital environment**.
 - Identifying **areas of improvement** that should be considered in Concordia University's digital strategy.
-



METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

	OBJECTIVES	PARTICIPANTS	DISCUSSION TOPICS
<p>PHASE 1 Group Discussions</p> <p>Conducted from February 27 to March 8, 2018</p>	<p>The first phase was an exploration of the community's current experience with technology, both in general and in the context of Concordia University. The main objective of this phase was to prepare for in-depth interviews in Phase 2. It identified potential areas of improvement that could be considered in the digital strategy.</p>	<p>Approximately*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 groups of 10 students • 2 groups of 10 staff • 2 groups of 10 faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily tasks and challenges • Satisfaction with the current digital environment at Concordia • Current habits with technology • Expectations and vision for the future digital strategy
<p>PHASE 2 Individual Interviews</p> <p>Conducted from March 27 to April 24, 2018</p>	<p>This phase allowed for a detailed investigation of each participant's individual experiences, expectations, and challenges related to technology and Concordia University. Because of the number of participants with whom we engaged on a one-to-one basis, this phase provided the most detailed information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 students • 10 staff members • 15 faculty members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily tasks and challenges • Satisfaction with the current digital environment at Concordia • Current habits with technology • Expectations and vision for the future digital strategy • Areas of improvement for the future digital strategy
<p>PHASE 3 Creative Workshops</p> <p>Conducted on May 4 and May 10, 2018</p>	<p>This last phase focused on establishing areas of improvement for the future and generating ideas on how these areas of improvement could take shape. To stimulate exchange and creativity, this phase combined students, faculty and staff in the same group.</p>	<p>2 groups of 10* with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 students • 3 faculty members • 3 staff members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges for the community • Satisfaction with the current digital environment at Concordia • Areas of improvement for the future digital strategy

* For each group, we recruited 10 participants to cover for potential no-shows and get an average of 8 participants per group.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT & NOTES TO THE READER

For each phase of the public consultations, participants were recruited by Concordia University. Special attention was given to ensure each cross-section of the community (students, staff and faculty) was represented by a diverse range of participants. As such, prospective participants were asked to complete a short recruitment questionnaire. Consultations were conducted in both the Webster and Vanier libraries and multiple time slots were made available. **Here is an overview of the recruitment criteria for each group:**

STUDENTS

- From all four faculties
- Mix of part-time and full-time students
- Mix of undergraduate and graduate students
- Good diversity in their state of progress in their program (first semester, last semester, etc.)
- Mix of local and international students
- Number of students with disabilities

STAFF

- Mix of employees from academic, research and administrative offices
- Mix of employees with a professional, support or executive profile
- Mix of full-time and part-time employees
- Good diversity in the number of years of service

FACULTY

- Mix of faculty members from all four faculties and librarians
- Mix of full-time and part-time faculty members

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report is a summary of the discussions that took place during the public consultations. As such, opinions that are shared in this report are the opinions of the participants, not the opinions of the researchers that moderated and analyzed the consultations.

The most important conclusions of the public consultations are summarized in a “Key Findings” section. Detailed results are discussed in the subsequent sections. When relevant, student, staff and faculty perspectives are discussed separately.

To simplify, the broad term “technology” is used to refer to platforms, websites, apps, software and electronic devices in general. Also, from this point, the acronym CU is used to refer to Concordia University.

*Quotes from participants are presented in the “Detailed Results” section of this report. Some of them were translated from French (free translation).**

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS



1

THE VALUE OF IN-PERSON INTERACTION

Many in-person interactions have been replaced by digital interactions, including in the classroom. While technology is great at maintaining existing relationships, it is not so great at creating new ones. **The community, especially new members who recently joined Concordia, finds it increasingly difficult to meet new people within the university.** This will negatively impact their experience in many ways, not least because a great deal of crucial information is currently being disseminated through informal in-person interactions.



2

BETTER USE OF EXISTING TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN MORE TECHNOLOGY

According to the community, the future digital strategy should not be about adding more technology, but rather about using the existing technology to its full potential. This would mean shifting resources toward maintaining and improving existing technology, and most of all, toward training the community in its optimal use.



3

MORE SHARING

The community reports that there is potential for far greater collaboration, within but especially across faculties. The future of higher education is multidisciplinary; students should not be restricted by their chosen faculty. The university's structure should reflect that evolving reality. One of the main obstacles to collaboration is simply a lack of awareness of what other community members actually do. This awareness is the foundation of information and expertise sharing. The community specifically expressed the need to be able to find people based on their expertise and interests. Until that can be done easily, a significant amount of potential will remain untapped.

KEY FINDINGS (CONT'D)



IMPROVED NEW COMMUNITY MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Crucial information is spread across multiple independent systems within the digital environment. This makes information search a constant challenge. This is especially true for new community members, who have no idea how the environment works. Because there is no formal onboarding process (or none that they are aware of), new members have to rely on veterans within their social network to show them the ropes. This is easier said than done for those who need to build their network from scratch. **The community recommends a more formal onboarding process to reduce the learning curve.** This may also be achieved in part by increasing awareness of existing resources for new community members.



FOCUS ON USER EXPERIENCE

Technology is an integral part of everyone's personal lives. The community is used to technologies that provide great user-experience; they're easy to learn, easy to use and tailored to the user's needs. Unfortunately, the community feels that many CU-specific technologies are not up to that standard. Even common tasks can be time consuming and error prone. **According to the community, user-experience and community feedback should play a greater role in the selection of technologies at CU.** Clunky and rigid technologies just don't cut it in today's digital world; the community expects more.

KEY FINDINGS (CONT'D)



BALANCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND CONSOLIDATION

While consolidating the digital ecosystem could help the community collaborate and find information, the community has expressed concerns that consolidation would reduce flexibility. In many ways, consolidation and flexibility are opposites. By reducing the number of digital platforms in order to regroup information, further restrictions are inevitably imposed on the way information is structured and distributed. **In its digital strategy, CU will need to reach the right balance of flexibility and consolidation.**



INTERACTIVE CLASSES

Both the student and faculty communities believe that future classrooms will be more interactive; not interactive in the digital sense, but rather in the human sense. They will rely on interaction between students and teachers as well as between students themselves. Future classrooms will move away from the standard lecture model. The community believes that achieving that objective does not necessarily require additional technologies. It relies first and foremost on an evolution of teaching methods. If technologies can support that evolution, all the better; if not, don't force more technology into classrooms.



PERSONAS



PERSONAS

1. STUDENTS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

RAHUL



BIO

Rahul is an international student from India who just started his second semester at JMSB. He has a cousin in Toronto who studied at CU and decided to do the same. He is still learning about CU and the Canadian culture which is challenging. Fortunately, he made new friends during his first semester and can now turn to them for CU-related issues.

*"I used to miss assignments because I didn't know how to use Moodle. Nobody showed me. Other students explained it to me and now it's fine."**

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	21
First language	Hindi
Citizenship	Study permit
Country of Origin	India
City of Residence	Montreal

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	JMSB
Program	Administration (BAdmin)
Status	Full-time
Progress	First year

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM**

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	+

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Improve his digital skills** – technology wasn't as prevalent in his previous studies.
- **Create a social network** – he didn't know anyone when he started his program. This is significant because important information is shared informally.
- **Familiarize with the CU digital environment** – he has no idea how it works. It's especially hard to use for him. He relies on the help of others to show him the ropes.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Develop skills relevant and attractive to the industry for his future career.
- Develop a new social network and create meaningful relationships within CU.
- Become a part of both the CU and Montreal communities.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Study at the library
- #4 Communicate with friends and other students on social media

* Quotes in this section are fictional. They are used to describe personas. / ** + = occasional user, ++ = light user (several times every semester), +++ = heavy user (day-to-day basis)

IN A TECH-BASED PROGRAM

ASHLEY



BIO

Ashley studies Computer Systems at CU. She has been interested in computers since she was very young. She is very connected in her daily life and is comfortable with most technologies. However, she often relies on YouTube tutorial videos to be able to use software specific to her program. When not in class, she tries to attend events organized by student groups in her field of study.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	23
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Use common technologies** – it's easy because she has a high level of digital literacy.
- **Use technologies specific to her program** – it's expected of her to be proficient with that technology, but it's not taught in class. She must find ways to learn on her own. Videos and online classes would be useful for this.
- **Find free spots in computer labs** – it's hard during exam period, but otherwise fine.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Become familiar with technology that is used in the industry.
- Be at the forefront of technology when she reaches the industry.
- Develop hands-on experience that will be directly applicable to her career.

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	ENCS
Program	Computer Systems (BCompSc)
Status	Full-time
Progress	Middle years

"Professors expect us to know how to use the software but we don't. YouTube helps a lot."

Leger

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	++

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Use specialized software in computer labs for her computer systems classes
- #4 Follow student groups related to her field of study on social media

NEW STUDENT

KATE



BIO

Kate just finished CEGEP and started her BA in Political Science at CU. She is currently trying to figure out how CU works. It is challenging because she is used to Omnivox*. Also, she doesn't know who to reach out to for help. Most of her friends from CEGEP chose other universities. She would like to get involved in a student group and go to events but doesn't know where to look.

* Online services platform used by the CEGEP system.

*“There are so many things to learn at Concordia.
I don't know why it doesn't work like Omnivox
with everything in one place. It would be easier.”*



SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	20
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	Arts & Science
Program	Political Science (BA)
Status	Full-time
Progress	First year

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	++
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Familiarize with new technologies and procedures** – there is a lot to learn.
- **Learn by herself** – there is no formal onboarding process that she is aware of.
- **Rely on veteran students** – they can help her learn the ropes.
- **Select courses** – selecting the right courses and enrolment itself are both difficult. She doesn't know who can help with selecting courses.
- **Get help** – she doesn't know who to reach out to for help.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Make the most of her experience at CU, academically and socially; choose the right course sequence and participate in interesting events.
- Get used to how CU works, both in terms of digital environment and as an institution.
- Build a new social network.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Study and do homework at home or at the library in-between classes
- #4 Try to meet new people and learn about student associations and groups

ABOUT TO GRADUATE

THOMAS



BIO

Thomas is in his last-semester in Civil Engineering. He used to be a full-time student but is now part-time. He only has two courses left that he wasn't able to take last semester. Thomas learned a lot of valuable skills in his program but also trained himself to use other software. He feels additional skills with more recent technologies are required to make it as a civil engineer in the industry.

"I had great professors and learned a lot in my courses but some of the technologies we use in class are outdated. This is why I also learn by myself."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	26
First language	French
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Laval

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	ENCS
Program	Civil Engineering (BEng)
Status	Part-time
Progress	Last semester

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	-
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	++

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Be up to date with the industry in terms of knowledge and technology** – he is disappointed that technology used in class isn't the norm in the industry anymore. He feels like the technologies he has to use for assignments are outdated.
- **Get career guidance from the community** – he would like career guidance from experienced members of the community but doesn't know who to reach out to.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Be equipped to be successful in his career after graduation.
- Ensure that the relationships he built at CU will be maintained after graduation.
- Do assignments that involve industry partners to get relevant experience.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Use specialized software in computer labs for his civil engineering classes
- #4 Develop additional skills with recent technologies to help with his career

MATURE STUDENT

LAURA



BIO

Laura moved to Canada 15 years ago with her husband to raise her family. It's been 10 years since she last studied business in university. She wants to get her MBA to do business consulting. It can be challenging to balance catching up with technology with her family responsibilities. Even if time is a constraint, Laura makes time to participate in activities organized by the John Molson Graduates Investment Club (JMGIC).

"Sometimes, it is difficult to find a balance between studying and family responsibilities. University is very different than what it used to be 10 years ago."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	45
First language	Spanish
Citizenship	Permanent Resident
Country of Origin	Spain
City of Residence	Montreal

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Graduate
Faculty	JMSB
Program	MBA
Status	Full-time
Progress	Half-way

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+++
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	++

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Get familiar with new technologies** – higher education has changed a great deal since she left university. There are many technologies she is unfamiliar with that are now required.
- **Catch up with basic technology** – she has a lot of catching up to do with tools like Word and Excel. She is either unaware of resources that could help or can't attend workshops in person because of personal life constraints (children, etc.).
- **Collaborate with other students in team projects** – they use different technologies for communication. Overall, it can also be difficult to relate to younger students.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Successfully redirect her career.
- Fill the gap in digital skills.
- Make the best of her experience at CU without neglecting existing responsibilities.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Access journal articles through the library online resources
- #4 Follow JMGIC on social media

STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY

JOSH



BIO

Josh studies Biology at CU. He suffers from a social anxiety disorder which sometimes makes it difficult for him to attend classes physically. He appreciates being able to access notes and course material online to learn by himself quietly at home. Despite his disability, Josh likes to participate in activities and events. He follows Concordia Student Union (CSU) on social media to know what is going on.

“Some days, I just can’t be in a class filled with people, I prefer to study at home. Live feed to lectures would help me keep up with my courses.”

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	24
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Longueuil

STUDENT PROFILE

Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	Arts & Science
Program	Biology (BSc)
Status	Full-time
Progress	Middle years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	++

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Study and go to class** – he feels like he is well served by the existing resources.
- **Keep up with classes when he can’t attend** – online learning and mobility are especially important for him. It allows him to keep up with the class even when he is not able to attend physically. Also, it allows him to learn at his own pace.
- **In-person interaction for specific advice and support** – he needs in-person support and advice. Email and phone communication are not sufficient.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Work in collaboration with CU to find ways to make the most of his time at CU without being limited by his disability.
- Otherwise, Josh has similar future aspirations to other students: create meaningful relationships, become a better learner and be successful in his future career.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class when possible
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Learn by himself at home when he can’t attend classes physically
- #4 Follow CSU on social media

UNDERGRAD STUDENT

ZHANG



BIO

Zhang grew up in Canada and started studying Film Production at CU after CEGEP. He often has several team projects going on simultaneously. He mainly uses Facebook to communicate with other students and keep up with team assignments. After a few semesters at CU, he still struggles to find information in the digital environment. However, he got used to digital tools like Moodle and MyConcordia.

“Managing team projects is a challenge. I had seven going on at the same time last semester. We usually set up a Facebook group for each project.”

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Male
Age	22
First language	Mandarin
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	China
City of Residence	Montreal

STUDENT PROFILE	
Program type	Undergraduate
Faculty	Fine Arts
Program	Film Production (BFA)
Status	Full-time
Progress	Middle years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	+

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Team assignments** – he has many team assignments. Communication usually goes smoothly. Problems occur when one team member doesn’t use the team’s preferred communication technology, although they usually manage to find common ground.
- **Finding information in the digital environment** – finding information is always difficult. Otherwise, he is confident in his digital skills and ability to keep up as technology evolves. As for CU-specific technologies like MyConcordia, there was a steep learning curve because he couldn’t rely on past experiences but it got better.
- **Get help with information search** – he likes to be independent in his information search but wants to be able to reach out in person for more complex issues.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Find and fuel his passion, regardless of his chosen faculty, by being exposed to many fields of study. Then, plan what he will do after his degree.
- Create meaningful relationships within CU.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Go to class
- #2 Access course material and assignments on Moodle
- #3 Communicate with other students for team projects, mainly through Facebook
- #4 Study at home, at the library or work on team projects in meeting rooms

GRAD STUDENT

JENNIFER

“I would like to collaborate with people who share my research interests but I don’t know how to find them.”



BIO

Jennifer is currently doing a PhD in Art History at CU. Her main focus is research for her thesis. She uses the library’s online tools almost everyday and often requests books from other libraries. She hopes to collaborate with faculty members and researchers with similar research interests in the future. They can be hard to find and reach. Jennifer is also a teaching assistant and often meets with undergraduate students.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Female
Age	32
First language	French
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

STUDENT PROFILE	
Program type	Graduate
Faculty	Fine Arts
Program	Art History (PhD)
Status	Part-time
Progress	Middle years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	++
Moodle	++
Cspace	-
Library resources	+++
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	+

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Use the library’s online resources** – she uses them extensively. She is generally satisfied with the offering and appreciates being able to access them from anywhere.
- **Find people based on her research interests** – she doesn’t know what her colleagues are working on. She would like to know who share her research interests.
- **Collaborate with faculty or researchers** – it can be challenging to closely collaborate and coordinate with the faculty members or researchers she works with.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Collaborate with high-level faculty and researchers.
- Access state-of-the-art resources.
- Be supported in her field of interest, which intersects with different fields.
- Become an expert and build a professional network in her chosen field.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Use the library resources for her research (online and offline)
- #2 Communicate with faculty and researchers through email
- #3 Go to class and access course material online
- #4 Work as a teaching assistant



PERSONAS

2. STAFF

IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

SUSAN



BIO

Susan has been working at CU for 18 years. She manages more than 30 people. On a day-to-day basis, she has to answer a lot of emails, plan several meetings, and review budgets. She thinks her time could be used more efficiently if administrative processes were simpler and quicker. She often has to fill out long paper forms, and wait a few weeks to get a response from another department.

"I am always moving from one system to another or filling forms. I feel like my time could be used more efficiently if we improved processes."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	53
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

STAFF PROFILE

Group	Administrative
Position type	Manager
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	18 years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	-
Millennium	++
CU official social media	-
Other CU social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Time management** – it feels like many mundane tasks are time consuming. A large portion of her time is spent doing non-value added tasks, which is demotivating.
- **Use multiple systems everyday** – she has to move from one system to another multiple times in a day. She has gotten familiar with the systems but definitely envisions ways to improve processes.
- **Access information** – the information she needs is spread across multiple systems.
- **Deal with technologies at CU** – they don't seem built to facilitate her common tasks.
- **Use workarounds** – she came up with a few workarounds through the years to deal with ineffective processes.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Spend her time on efficient tasks.
- Play an active role in the evolution of CU.
- Share her experience across CU and feel that her expertise is valued.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Manage her team
- #2 Answer emails
- #3 Meetings with people from different departments and faculties
- #4 Review budgets

IN A COMMUNICATION ROLE

ALEX



BIO

Alex regularly creates content to communicate with students, staff, faculty and the public using Concordia.ca and social media. Sometimes, he struggles with deadlines when he has to wait for approval. He thinks this whole process should be faster and more flexible. Even if Alex works with CU's official social media, he follows other CU-related accounts to make sure he knows what is going on.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	34
First language	French
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Communication** – he has a hard time effectively communicating with the community at large. When he does, he has little data to know if it was effective or not.
- **Leverage influencers at CU** – it is difficult to reach and engage these influencers.
- **Lack of human resources** – he does a job that would require more than one employee. Time and expertise are lacking for it to be done optimally.
- **Lack of flexibility** – the website architecture is rigid and not adapted to his needs.
- **Relying on central services** – this creates bottlenecks and increases delay.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Contribute in making CU a leader in higher education.
- Create a meaningful and bidirectional relationship between his department and CU.
- Successfully engage with the community on different platforms.
- Be independent in his work and be able to rely on specific expertise when needed.

STAFF PROFILE

Group	Administrative
Position type	Professional
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	5 years

"I am caught between demand and processes. More flexibility and resources would make communication easier and more efficient."

Leger

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+++
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	-
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+++
Other CU social media	++

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Communicate with students, staff and faculty on different platforms
- #2 Promote CU to the public
- #3 Create content for the website and social media accounts
- #4 Submit communication material for approval and respect deadlines

IN A SUPPORT ROLE

OLIVER



BIO

Oliver works for IITS* at CU. On a daily basis, he answers support requests from the community. His biggest challenge is dealing with the community's varying needs and digital skills. The current digital environment is very rigid and doesn't allow for much customization. In the future, he hopes to have sufficient resources to create a more flexible digital environment.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Male
Age	43
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Saint-Lambert

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Awareness** – members of the community are unaware of the resources they have to help them with the digital environment outside of direct technical support.
- **Lack of flexibility** – it can be difficult to fulfill specific needs. Most technologies are not built to be modified. Customization is often impossible or very resource intensive.
- **Lack of staff** – there is not enough staff to answer all support requests quickly.
- **Varying needs and skills** – it is challenging to deal with members of the community who have widely different needs and digital skills. It's hard to satisfy everyone.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Have the human and financial resources to answer the community's needs.
- Work with a digital environment that is more flexible.
- Rely on a clear digital strategy from CU to help focus his energy and time.

"Everyone has different needs and digital skills. Right now, the digital environment is too rigid to adapt to those varying needs and skills."

Leger

STAFF PROFILE	
Group	Administrative
Position type	Professional
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	10 years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	+++
MyConcordia	+++
Moodle	+++
Cspace	+++
Library resources	+++
Millennium	+++
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	-

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Answer support requests
- #2 Assist students, staff and faculty with the entire digital ecosystem
- #3 Handle technical issues and bugs when necessary
- #4 Work on the digital ecosystem (software development, etc.)

NEW EMPLOYEE

SOFIA



BIO

Sofia just started as a part-time support staff member at CU. Her main role is to help students with their academic experience. She answers their questions by email, by phone or in person. She uses Concordia.ca to help answer most questions. She is still lost in CU's digital environment. She only had minimal training on her first work day but her colleagues have been very helpful with everything.

"I didn't get a formal training when I started at Concordia so I am still figuring things out. My colleagues have been very helpful."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	27
First language	Russian
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Ukraine
City of Residence	Montreal

STAFF PROFILE

Group	Academic
Position type	Support/Technical
Status	Part-time
Years at Concordia	3 months

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+++
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	+
Millennium	-
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Familiarize herself with CU's digital environment** – she is unfamiliar with it.
- **Learn how things work by herself** – she has had little onboarding. She has to find out how things work by herself or rely on veteran colleagues to show her.
- **Contact the right people** – she doesn't know who does what at CU yet. Once again, she has to rely on veteran colleagues to tell her who to contact.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Find her place among staff members and make a difference in the community.
- Collaborate with staff from all over Concordia.
- Quickly become efficient in her new role.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Available to answer questions about programs, scholarships, etc.
- #2 Answer phone calls and emails
- #3 Meet with students in person
- #4 Use of Concordia.ca to find the information students ask her for

LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE

ROBERT



BIO

Robert spent his whole career at CU. He now manages a team of 40 people to promote research. Even as an experienced staff member, he still learns valuable information somewhat randomly. He has built a large informal network to keep up with everything. He knows how to work around inefficiencies, but hopes CU will consider the feedback of the community to improve things. A lot of valuable expertise could be shared.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	62
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Westmount

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Work around the inefficiencies** – he has a good knowledge of the digital environment and its limitations but still learns about valuable information randomly. He has found workarounds to deal with some of the inefficiencies through the years.
- **Create a network within CU** – he has built a large informal network.
- **Deal with technologies at CU** – he feels that CU is prioritizing new technologies rather than making the most out of existing technologies and fixing problems.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- More leveraging of the community’s feedback. He knows CU is collecting feedback from the community, but he wants to feel it has a real impact.
- Share his experience and expertise across CU.
- Spend his time on meaningful tasks.

“Concordia should leverage community feedback to make existing technologies more efficient.”

Leger

STAFF PROFILE

Group	Research
Position type	Manager
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	38 years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+++
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	++
Millennium	++
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	-

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Manage a team of 40 people
- #2 Promote research internally across faculties and externally at CU
- #3 Make sure information on research projects is available
- #4 Support researchers, graduate students and industry partners

IN A LARGE TEAM / CROSS-TEAM PROJECTS

CHLOE

“Communication is a challenge. Nobody uses the same tools.”



BIO

Chloe works as an accountant in a large department. On a day-to-day basis, she often has to communicate with people from different departments. It can be challenging. Each department uses different tools and not everyone answers their emails. After talking to some colleagues, Chloe thinks a dedicated collaboration tool like Slack could be useful across all departments.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Female
Age	39
First language	French
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Collaboration** – it is a challenge because of compatibility issues. Different departments use different technologies. It’s hard to have everyone move to a common platform.
- **Lack of flexibility** – flexibility is limited within a large department. Everyone has to use the same technologies, which are not necessarily adapted to each person’s role.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Have an impact within her large department.
- Collaborate in a more efficient and meaningful way.
- Get involved and have her say in large and important projects at CU.

STAFF PROFILE	
Group	Administrative
Position type	Professional
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	4 years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	-
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	-
Millennium	+++
CU official social media	+
Other CU social media	-

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Deal with budgets
- #2 Communicate with people from her large department
- #3 Communicate with people from other departments
- #4 Adapt her communication strategy to the people she needs to reach out to

IN A SMALL TEAM / DEPARTMENT

LOGAN



BIO

Logan is a technical staff member in a small department at CU. He works with Moodle to develop course material. He works with a small team of 6 people. They usually communicate in person and use a shared calendar. Logan thinks new digital tools could be useful for his work and to let the community know what his team does. However, he wants to avoid rigid integrated systems.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	31
First language	English
Citizenship	Permanent Resident
Country of Origin	United States
City of Residence	Montreal

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Communicate and collaborate** – he mostly communicates with his team in person and uses a shared calendar specific to his team. He feels that it works better than the official technologies used across CU. Because he works with a small team, it is easy and convenient to meet in person rather than communicate by phone or email.
- **Be flexible** – an agile team must be flexible with technology.
- **Use CU’s administrative systems** – he gets frustrated when using CU’s administrative systems. User-experience is subpar compared to other technologies he uses.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Continue to enjoy the flexibility he has with his team, but with additional resources.
- Raise awareness of his department across Concordia; what they do and why.

STAFF PROFILE

Group	Academic
Position type	Support/Technical
Status	Full-time
Years at Concordia	2 years

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	-
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	+++
Cspace	+
Library resources	-
Millennium	-
CU official social media	-
Other CU social media	-

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Administrative work with Moodle
- #2 Prepare course material
- #3 Create educational material
- #4 Help organize content on Moodle

“I have a small team. We have emails and a shared calendar but in-person communication is usually easier.”



PERSONAS
3. *FACULTY*

FULL-TIME FACULTY

GREGG



BIO

Gregg tries to split his time equally between research, teaching and administrative tasks. In practice, he ends up dedicating most of his time to research during the summer. Teaching and administrative tasks keep him busy during the fall and winter semesters. He spends a lot of time filling reports and trying to get information from tools like Millennium. Administrative tasks should be streamlined and CU should give him more freedom.

"I spend a lot of time looking for money. It is very time consuming because I have to fill financial reports and search for relevant information."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	48
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Brossard

FACULTY PROFILE

Status	Full-time
Faculty	JMSB
Years at Concordia	10 years
% Research	33%
% Teaching	33%
% Admin	33%

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	+++
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	+++
CU social media	+
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Time-consuming tasks** – his main frustration is that a lot of his time is spent on non-value added tasks. Those tasks could be streamlined considerably.
- **Structure** – he feels restricted by CU's structure. He wants more freedom.
- **Increasing number of students per class** – it negatively affects the learning experience.
- **Get approvals to purchase technologies** – he has very specific technological needs for his research. He doesn't like to require approval to purchase certain technologies.
- **Lack of collaboration** – he would like more collaboration across faculties.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Reduce time allocated to administrative tasks to focus on teaching and research.
- Have more freedom from structure and institutional constraints.
- Have the resources to conduct state-of-the-art research.
- Collaborate with experts, both staff and faculty, across CU and beyond.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Look for research funds
- #2 Prepare courses, upload course material on Moodle and teach
- #3 Work on research projects and submit papers to journals
- #4 Answer emails

PART-TIME FACULTY

SONIA



BIO

Sonia thinks of time management as her biggest challenge at CU. She works in the industry and teaches at the same time. As a part-time faculty member, she often has to teach new courses on short notice. She learns a lot from that process, but getting everything ready in time is always difficult. She feels more interaction between faculty and researchers, including part-time faculty, would benefit everyone. They could share their experience and expertise.

"I often have to teach new courses on short notice. I learn a lot but it is always difficult to have everything ready in time. I have to start from scratch."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	51
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

FACULTY PROFILE

Status	Part-time
Faculty	Arts & Science
Years at Concordia	15 years
% Research	-
% Teaching	100%
% Admin	-

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	++
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	-
CU social media	-
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Mobility** – she is assigned to a cramped office. As such, she mostly works remotely.
- **Collaboration** – she feels separated from the rest of the CU community. She would like more interaction with other faculty members and researchers in related fields. At the very least, she would like to know who these faculty members are.
- **Time management** – she is very limited by time, especially when she is assigned a new course, which requires a lot of work to get up and running.
- **Stay up to date** – there is a lack of time and awareness of available resources.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Be more involved in the CU community and decision-making.
- Have access to more resources to be able offer an innovative learning experience to students while managing time and resource constraints.
- Share her concrete experience in the industry with students.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Prepare courses, upload course material on Moodle and teach
- #2 Answer emails
- #3 Meet students in person to answer questions during office hours
- #4 Get familiar with new courses

LIBRARIAN

JACOB



BIO

Jacob is constantly in touch with students though email but also online chat, social media and in person. His main goal is to stay current and on track to offer students a meaningful experience with the library using innovative tools. He is also in charge of buying resources. He would like to know more about what faculty members are working on to make sure that the right resources are available.

"I am constantly in touch with students. I always try to find innovative ways to connect with them. They like using online chat and social media to ask questions."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Male
Age	39
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

FACULTY PROFILE	
Status	Full-time
Faculty	Library
Years at Concordia	8 years
% Research	80% (library work)
% Teaching	10%
% Admin	10%

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	++
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	-
CU social media	+++
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Structure** – rigid technological structure can be a challenge.
- **Communicate with faculty** – outreach to faculty members and getting their feedback is difficult. That outreach is essential to make sure the right resources are available.
- **Communicate with students** – reaching out to students through the traditional email method is inefficient. He must explore other ways.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Offer the best and most adapted resources to faculty and students.
- Find innovative ways to help faculty and students achieve their goals.
- Leverage online learning to help students learn on their own.
- Contribute to making the library a central part of the CU experience.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Answer questions from students through email, online chat, social media and at the "Ask us" desk
- #2 Buy resources for the library
- #3 Give presentations in some courses about the library resources
- #4 Work on research projects

NEW FACULTY MEMBER

VANESSA



BIO

Vanessa used to be part-time faculty in France. She recently moved to Montreal and joined CU as full-time faculty. As a new faculty member, she needs to put in a lot of time to get used to her new environment. She mainly focuses on research. Because she is an assistant professor, she feels pressure to publish and build her CV. Time is a big challenge. At this point in her career, she can't turn down research or teaching opportunities.

"Time is a big challenge. I have to learn everything and I don't want to turn down any research or teaching opportunity."

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	42
First language	French
Citizenship	Work permit
Country of Origin	France
City of Residence	Montreal

FACULTY PROFILE

Status	Full-time
Faculty	JMSB
Years at Concordia	1 year
% Research	60%
% Teaching	30%
% Admin	10%

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	++
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	+++
CU social media	+
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Learn by herself or rely on colleagues** – there is not much guidance. She must also get used to a new environment that is very different from her previous university.
- **Lack of time** – a lot of time is lost in the learning curve of the new environment.
- **Performance** – there is pressure to perform because she has to build her career. She needs to be published and build a strong CV to maintain her position.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Lay out a plan to successfully achieve tenure.
- Create a place for her in the faculty community.
- Build collaborative relationships with other faculty members and researchers.
- Get used to a new environment.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Look for research funds
- #2 Work on research projects and submit papers to journals
- #3 Prepare courses, upload course material on Moodle and teach
- #4 Answer emails

IN A TECH-BASED PROGRAM

MICHAEL



BIO

Michael used his programming skills to develop his own website to distribute course material and communicate with students. He prefers using his own website rather than Moodle, which he finds unintuitive. He communicates by email when he has to but prefers to use tools like Slack and GitHub, which make collaboration easier. To help with research, Michael would like to receive more support with specialized technologies.

"I don't use Moodle. It's too rigid. I created my own website to share course material and communicate with my students."

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Male
Age	51
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Saint-Constant

FACULTY PROFILE

Status	Full-time
Faculty	ENCS
Years at Concordia	26 years
% Research	40%
% Teaching	40%
% Admin	20%

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	++
CU social media	-
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Build his own digital tools** – because he has a very high level of digital literacy and programming skills, he built his own website to share course material with students. He likes that it is much more flexible than the official digital environment.
- **Find support** – it is difficult to find support adapted to his specific needs.
- **Lack of flexibility** – he has specific technological needs. The current structure lacks flexibility and sometimes fails to provide technology that meets his needs.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Offer a great learning experience to students while dealing with digital limitations.
- Achieve a degree of freedom to teach and research using his favored technology.
- Ensure that his teaching and department evolve as fast as technology does.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Prepare courses, upload course material on his website and teach
- #2 Work on research projects and submit papers to journals
- #3 Communicate with graduate students and faculty with Slack and GitHub
- #4 Answer emails

FROM AN ART-FOCUSED PROGRAM

GRACE



BIO

Grace is a visual artist. She wants to share her passion with students and inspire them. She always thinks of new ways to promote and display art across CU. Promoting events is challenging for her. She doesn't always know who to reach out to, and how to reach out. She thinks CU could help her get more exposure, both online and offline. She also works on several art projects on her own and showcases them through exhibitions.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Gender	Female
Age	36
First language	English
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Storing art in digital format** – storing art in digital format is an important challenge. She has to rely on specialized software tailored to that purpose.
- **Showcase art** – showcasing art across the CU community is a challenge.
- **Organize events** – organizing events can be difficult, unless you already know who to reach out to. It is difficult to make sure the community is aware of events.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Find innovative ways to integrate art in the curriculum across faculties.
- Archive, distribute and display art in a digital format that adequately showcases it.
- Meaningfully engage with the community across all faculties.

FACULTY PROFILE	
Status	Full-time
Faculty	Fine Arts
Years at Concordia	3 years
% Research	33% (art projects)
% Teaching	33%
% Admin	33%

"I wish Concordia would help me get more exposure to promote art across the university."

Leger

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	
Concordia.ca	+
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	+++
Cspace	+
Library resources	+
Millennium	++
CU social media	++
Other social media	-

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Prepare courses, upload course material on Moodle and teach
- #2 Work on art projects and participate in various exhibitions
- #3 Develop initiatives to promote and display art across CU
- #4 Answer emails

TECHNOLOGY SKEPTIC

CLAIRE



BIO

Claire likes to teach with minimal technology. She sees technology as an obstacle to discussion and debates which are crucial in her courses. All digital devices are forbidden in her class to prevent distraction. She believes putting course material online will lower class attendance. She also thinks the high number of students in classrooms negatively affects the learning experience.

“Technology is a distraction for students. This is why I ban digital devices in class. I believe discussion and debates provide the best learning experience.”

Leger

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Female
Age	53
First language	French
Citizenship	Canadian
Country of Origin	Canada
City of Residence	Montreal

FACULTY PROFILE

Status	Part-time
Faculty	Arts & Science
Years at Concordia	22 years
% Research	-
% Teaching	100%
% Admin	-

USE OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Concordia.ca	-
MyConcordia	+
Moodle	-
Cspace	+
Library resources	+++
Millennium	-
CU social media	-
Other social media	-

DAILY CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES

- **Prevent distraction in class** – she feels that technology is a distraction for students. It’s harmful to the learning experience. As such, she bans devices in class.
- **Minimize technology use** – she minimizes her use of technology in her personal and professional life. She has had bad experiences with faulty technology in classrooms.
- **Work with CU digital environment** – she isn’t familiar with CU’s digital environment and isn’t particularly interested in learning more than what is absolutely necessary. It is not useful to her. She feels like some technologies are forced on faculty members.
- **Too many students per class** – it affects the learning experience negatively.

MOTIVATIONS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- Figure a way in which teaching and collaboration doesn’t rely on technology so much.
- Create a meaningful learning experience for students in a world full of distractions.
- Encourage being in class physically. Nothing replaces in-person interactions.

EVERYDAY TASKS

- #1 Prepare courses and teach
- #2 Answer emails
- #3 Meet students in person to answer questions during office hours
- #4 Get familiar with new courses

DETAILED RESULTS

A grayscale photograph of a person working at a desk. The person is wearing a denim jacket and is holding a pen in their right hand while typing on a laptop keyboard with their left hand. A white coffee cup on a saucer is visible on the desk to the right of the laptop. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

DETAILED RESULTS

1. TYPICAL DAY

TYPICAL DAY

FOR STUDENTS

There is little difference between the technologies they choose to use at the university and the ones they already use in their personal life. This is especially true of communication and collaboration tools. There are many reasons for that: they already know how to use these tools, everyone is already using them and they are easily accessible from anywhere and across all devices.

FOR STAFF

Unlike students and faculty, there are no common typical tasks for staff. Their roles and responsibilities vary widely from one employee to the next. The one task that all employees must do daily is to communicate and collaborate with the community. As we will discuss later in this report, collaboration includes many challenges.

FOR FACULTY

As is the case for students, faculty members favor technologies that they already know how to use. However, there is less homogeneity in which technologies the faculty community frequently uses compared to students. This can prove a challenge in collaboration.



A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a denim jacket and holding a pen in their left hand. A white coffee cup is visible on the right side of the desk. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or study environment.

DETAILED RESULTS

2. DIGITAL SKILLS

DIGITAL SKILLS

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

During the public consultations, digital skills were loosely defined as the ability to successfully use available technologies. **In general, the community is confident in its current level of digital skills.** That confidence is crucial for the future, because it affects the individual's willingness to learn new technology autonomously. Those with less confidence are less likely to willingly adopt new technology and will be more reliant on formal training and support.

According to the community, developing digital skills is a shared responsibility between CU and each community member. CU's main responsibility is to ensure everyone in the community has a basic level of digital literacy. Currently, the widely varying level of digital literacy across the community is an important obstacle in communication and collaboration. For example, students must adapt to some teachers using different technologies for sharing course material. This adds avoidable complexity in the daily experience of students.

Throughout the public consultations, it was said that every group of the community could benefit from training in basic digital skills in some way. Unfortunately, there is definitely a **stigma related to digital training**. It can be perceived as a waste of time unless for beginners with little or no prior experience. In any case, it's not very appealing for most of the community. It could be made more appealing through innovative topics, incentives and/or the right timing in the semester.

*"I think my skills are pretty sufficient. There are always some things that I want to work on but day-to-day I don't really have any issues. If something comes up, I am usually able to either resolve it myself or just give a phone call..."**

- A faculty member

"I definitely see it as a team effort (...) I feel like if there were certain guidelines, certain tips given (...) then it's up to me to actually read whatever documentation they send or whatever format they choose. Maybe it's a training I have to register for."

- A staff member

* All quotes in this section (detailed results) are real quotes from members of the community.

DIGITAL SKILLS

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

In most cases, students are confident in their digital skills, both for what is required at Concordia and for their careers after they graduate. They are also confident in their ability to stay up-to-date as technology evolves. It is after all, something they have done all their lives. That being said, not all students are that confident. **Some students express the need for more support** in the development of their digital skills. Specifically:

- **Mature students** who return to university after a few years in the workforce.
- **International students** who were not exposed to technology to the same extent in their previous studies.
- **Students in more technology-based programs that use specialized technologies.** They mention that familiarity with these types of technologies is often required, but they are not taught in class. Students have to learn by themselves, outside of class to be able to complete their assignments.

Students feel that developing digital skills is mostly their responsibility rather than CU's. So far in their life, they have developed their digital skills by themselves through trial and error. Free online tutorials, such as what is available on YouTube, are a good resource when they come across more difficult tasks. The students that we met have attended very few official training workshops at CU. Those they attended were usually focused on general orientation or CU-specific technologies, such as the library's online resources. Students told us they were satisfied with the workshops they attended.

To help students develop digital skills, CU should focus primarily on making existing resources more readily accessible rather than creating more resources. Students already feel overwhelmed by information at times. Multiplying the information would only compound the problem.

“There are so many useful tools out there that I discovered on my own or with other students that they didn't show me that I'm happy I learned just through online tutorials. It is like so disappointing because there are such great tools out there.”

- A student in its last semester

“I did have a major problem at the beginning of this semester (...) the lab report was asking for certain types of graphs which I did not know how to do on Excel.”

- An international student

DIGITAL SKILLS

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

The staff community is also confident in its current digital skills and feels these skills are sufficient to be successful at CU. However, **the level of digital literacy among staff varies more than it does among students**. Staff are also aware that their skills will need to constantly improve to remain successful in their career.

Similarly to students, staff members have developed most of their digital skills by themselves through trial and error and online training. Some have also attended workshops offered by the university, once again mostly on the topic of CU-specific technologies. In their experience, hands-on training is more efficient and should be favored over other types of training.

In the staff community's opinion, CU has the responsibility to ensure all employees have a basic level of digital literacy. Beyond that, it's the employee's responsibility to improve their skills, but CU should provide the time as well as the budget to do so.

“Self-learning (...) trial and error, and taking a specific problem and then finding the most efficient way to solve it (...) Most of that is happening outside the context of the university though.”

- A staff member on how he developed his digital skills

“Regardless of your duty, there must be kind of regular training at least once a year or twice a year that is related to technology. We spend enough time at the office but we don't have time to improve ourselves. If the university applies something like that, that will be very fruitful for both sides.”

- A staff member on CU's responsibility toward digital skills

DIGITAL SKILLS

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Faculty and staff have a similar outlook on digital skills: they are confident in their skills and mostly developed these skills through experience. As it does with staff, digital literacy can vary widely from one faculty member to another.

Faculty members believe that developing digital skills is a shared responsibility between each faculty member and CU. However, they distinguish between **two different types of digital skills**:

- **CU-specific or administrative technologies such as Moodle.** For these technologies, CU should provide easy-to-access resources so that faculty can learn how to use them efficiently and at their convenience. Our participants have mentioned that workshops often take place during a very busy part of the semester. As such, they can rarely attend them.
- **Technology specific to the faculty's area of expertise.** For these technologies, individual faculty members should manage their own training, but CU needs to provide the time and budget to allow for this.

“You can learn anything you want to do on the Internet. The only thing the university needs to give me is time and freedom which it fails at.”

- A faculty member

“I cannot learn something else. I cannot learn another form of technology (...) as a contract, I teach between 150 and 200 students without a TA.”*

- A part-time faculty member on how time to learn is lacking

“For Millennium, it seems like it just needs some little web tutorial, like how you do the most basic obvious tasks that everybody wants to do.”

- A faculty member

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a denim jacket and holding a pen in their left hand. A white coffee cup is visible on the right side of the desk. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source.

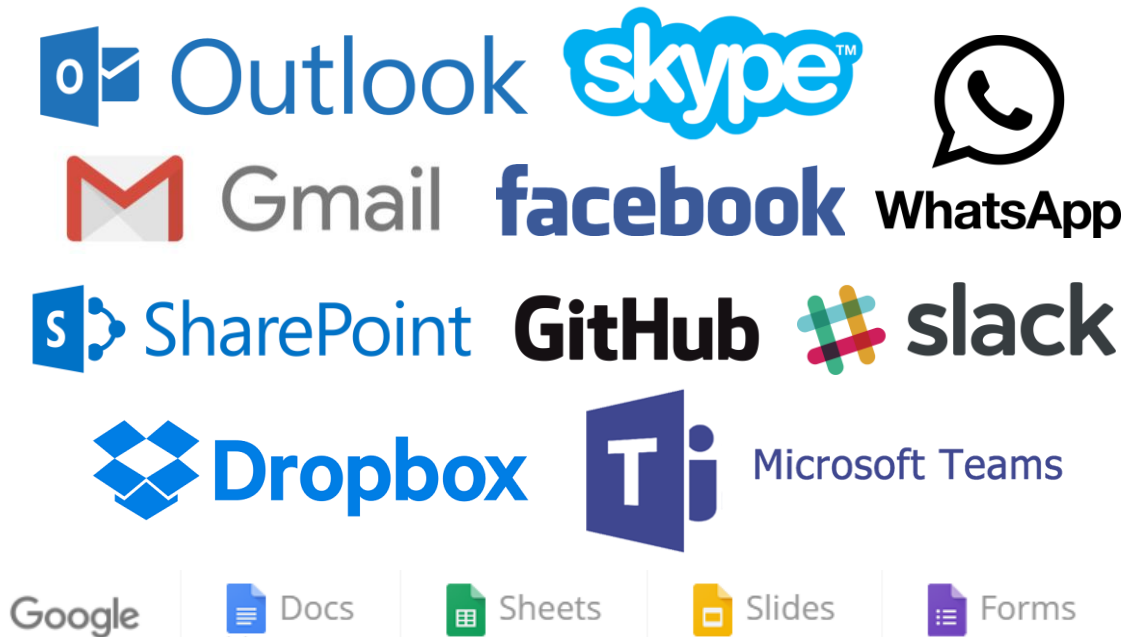
DETAILED RESULTS

3. COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Communication, especially communication outside one's immediate circle, is a major challenge for the community. Communication within a given team is less problematic because the whole team is likely to be using the same communication technology and procedures. However, this is not the case on a larger scale.



COMMUNICATION

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

WITH OTHER STUDENTS

To interact with other students, they rely on third-party platforms that are already widely adopted, such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Google Drive, Google Docs and Dropbox. As such, communication between students is easy. They mostly use the same technologies that they've always used in their personal life. However, difficulties can occur when one student in a team project does not use the team's favored technology, by choice or otherwise. This type of situation is usually resolved by using an alternative technology.

Students, especially younger students, can be **uncomfortable with the formality of email**. Unlike the rest of the community, this is not their preferred channel of communication. They are used to the features of third-party platforms that are not available with email, such as seeing the history of a conversation at a glance and being informed if the recipient has read the message.

Many students have also mentioned the **increasing difficulty of meeting new people in person**. There is now little interaction between students in class. This is compounded by the auditorium configuration of most classrooms, where all students are turned towards the teachers and away from other students. This is a significant challenge for new or international students who have to build a new social network as they enter CU. These students have told us that technology is great at maintaining existing relationships, but it's not so great at creating new ones.

"We're using various things. We have a Facebook Messenger group going, we have a Google Doc going and we have a Facebook page, so nothing Concordia related."

- A student discussing an ongoing group project

"If someone has chosen one stream and you have chosen another then it's hard to connect."

- A student

"Greatest challenge... Well, making friends (...) Some people, they just look at their phone, they don't have their heads up so you need to talk to them to form your group to do your group project."

- An international student

COMMUNICATION

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

WITH FACULTY

To communicate with faculty, students usually use email. This can be unreliable as faculty members have different standards in terms of response time. Some will reliably respond within 24 hours, others will need to be reminded with a second email. Students tell us that the best way to communicate with faculty is meeting **in person during office hours**.

Students rarely use Moodle to communicate with faculty. They don't always get a response and may doubt the teacher even received the message at all.

WITH STAFF

As they do with faculty, students mainly use email to communicate with staff. They also think that meeting in person is better and having an **appointment is best**. They would like to have some kind of online booking solution for meeting in person with staff to avoid long lines.

Students sometimes use the phone to communicate with staff, but it can take a long time before they are put in communication with the right person. Indeed, **the greatest difficulty in communicating with staff is knowing who the right person to contact is**.

“Because the professors have a lot of things to do (...) sometimes they are so busy (...) there might be some difficulties for us to reach them but generally, if you meet the professors regularly, there is no problem.”

- A student about communication with faculty

“Usually it's pretty confusing (...) It's just a really big institution, trying to figure out who to go to, to address the specific thing that you are trying to figure out.”

- A student about communication with staff

COMMUNICATION

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

WITH STUDENTS

Staff usually communicate with students through email. One-on-one communication is not problematic. However, broad-based communications with students and the community at large are a challenge. Staff members are unsure about what they can and cannot do. For example, some may wonder if email blasts are allowed. When they do communicate at large, they have little data to know if the communication was successful or not. This makes promoting events and services difficult.

WITH OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

For communicating with fellow staff members, they mostly use email. They will, however, favor meeting in person for a quick response. Some teams use dedicated collaboration technologies such as Slack or MS Teams. Many staff members have told us that instant messaging is or could be useful in their work. Despite the potential, they mention that everybody would have to use live chat for it to be really useful.

It's a challenge for staff to find up-to-date contact information. This information is often spread across multiple systems and hard to find unless you know exactly what you are looking for.

WITH FACULTY

Staff usually rely on email to reach out to faculty, but response time varies from one faculty member to another. Staff are aware that faculty can be overwhelmed by the number of emails they receive and mention it is difficult to stay on top of their inbox. The phone is not a reliable way to communicate with faculty. They are in and out of their office most of the time.

“Writing and sending an email is a big production; people put their signature and stuff. It’s much easier just to send a quick chat.”

- A staff member about communication with staff

“It’s a big struggle (...) I find faculty, especially for the Concordia email account, it’s really varied whether they pay attention to it.”

- A staff member about communication with faculty

COMMUNICATION

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

WITH STUDENTS

Faculty members usually communicate with students through email. They notice that many younger students seem to be uncomfortable with the formality of email. To communicate with a whole class, most will create an announcement on Moodle. Faculty will favor in-person meetings for more complex student questions. In addition to being more convenient, it provides an opportunity for a more pedagogical approach when answering questions.

To communicate with graduate students with whom they work more closely, some faculty will use dedicated collaboration technologies (e.g., real-time chat, Slack, Microsoft Teams).

WITH OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS

They mostly communicate with other faculty members through email. It does not prove to be much of a problem. Some faculty members mention that there is **little opportunity for more informal interactions between faculties.** Physical spaces dedicated to informal interactions, such as faculty lounges, have disappeared.

WITH STAFF

Faculty members mostly communicate with staff through email. This works well and staff are responsive. However, faculty members mentioned that it's difficult to find specialized help for specific technological support. This is especially true for faculty in highly technological fields.

“If there is a specific announcement, a specific deliverable, I use Moodle. I do the whole announcement thing on Moodle which goes to everybody’s email and there are always three or four students in the class who gave an email that they never use on Moodle so they never get the message.”

- A faculty member about communication with students

“That can be though (...) some people you may not see for months (...) you have to go out of your way to specifically meet and talk to people. I don’t think it’s the best environment for the casual interactions between faculty members.”

- A faculty member about communication with faculty

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a dark jacket. To the right of the laptop, there is a white coffee cup on a saucer. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or workspace. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

DETAILED RESULTS

4. EXPERIENCE WITH THE CURRENT DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

CONCORDIA.CA

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Overall, the community finds the Concordia.ca website visually appealing. It is a good showcase for CU. As such, it is most useful for prospective students. It's of limited usefulness for current students, staff and faculty outside of a quick link to online resources.

The main problem with the website is that its information architecture is unintuitive for the community. Thus, information is hard to find. Users rely on Google Search to find what they are looking for on the website.

MyConcordia Cspace Webmail Library Directories A-Z Maps The Campaign for Concordia Quick links

UNIVERSITÉ **Concordia** UNIVERSITY MONTREAL

Future students Student hub Alumni & friends Parents Faculty & staff Media

ABOUT ACADEMICS ADMISSIONS CAMPUS LIFE RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL FR

7 educational turning points

From life as a WWII refugee to Mordecai Richler's mentorship — discover the key learning experiences of some of Concordia's 2018 honorands.

Study at Concordia

concordia.ca/unes/main/stories/.../concordia-spring-2018-honorands-describe-a-turning-point-in-their-lives.html... GRADUATE CONTINUING EDUCATION EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

CONCORDIA.CA

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

For students, Concordia.ca is most useful when they are still prospective students. They use it to collect information on the available programs and eventually enroll. Once they become students and have completed a few semesters at CU, the website becomes much less useful. It mostly serves as a quick link to other more useful resources, such as MyConcordia or the directory.

The website is visually attractive and looks modern. Based on current students' recollection, it is useful and relatively easy to use for prospective students. While the website is helpful for prospective students when gathering information, it does not provide as good an experience to current students. It does not support a current student's most common tasks.

The large volume of content and the way it's organized make it hard for students to find what they are looking for. According to them, the unintuitive information architecture takes a while to get used to. Students usually learn to rely on Google Search to find what they're looking for on the website. When that isn't successful, they will ask another student for help. These informal interactions currently play an important role in information dissemination.

Also, students have noticed a few **inconsistencies in the information** that is available across the digital environment. They told us some pages had not been updated in years, while others are brand new. For that reason, students do not entirely trust the information on the website.

"It's very nice visually, quite easy to navigate through, especially in the prospective stage when I was applying."

- A student in his first year at CU

"I think it's very difficult to navigate, to find specifically what you want to get to. I find googling it really brings me the answers I need (...) The Concordia website tries to keep bringing me through different links and then I get confused pretty quickly."

- A student half-way in his program

CONCORDIA.CA

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Usage of the website will vary based on the employee's role and responsibilities. In most cases, staff members don't use the website very much. They mostly use it to access the directories and calendars. Employees who interact with students will also use it to find answers to student questions.

Like the rest of the community, staff members generally think that the website is visually appealing. However, information is hard to find, unless you know precisely where to look. Staff members who create content for the website also mention that the templates are rigid. This makes it hard to create content unless it already fits into the existing template. As a workaround, many staff members have created their own independent website. This is also the case with faculty members.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Like staff, faculty rarely use the website outside of the directories and calendar. As it is, Concordia.ca is not useful for most of the faculty's common tasks. However, it's visually appealing and provides a good overview of what CU does in terms of teaching, research, etc.

While it provides a good overview, it doesn't provide much detailed information on specific faculties. Faculty members have to turn to other sources of information.

"One of the challenges is that the platform is kind of a static platform (...) It doesn't have developers tools."

- A staff member about content creation

"I don't go on it too often (...) I do like the big banner on top that constantly changes because it keeps me informed about what is going on at Concordia."

- A faculty member about the website

"Some of my colleagues are writing blog posts (...) I would like to have extensions of the faculty profile on Concordia.ca that would give me an outlet like that."

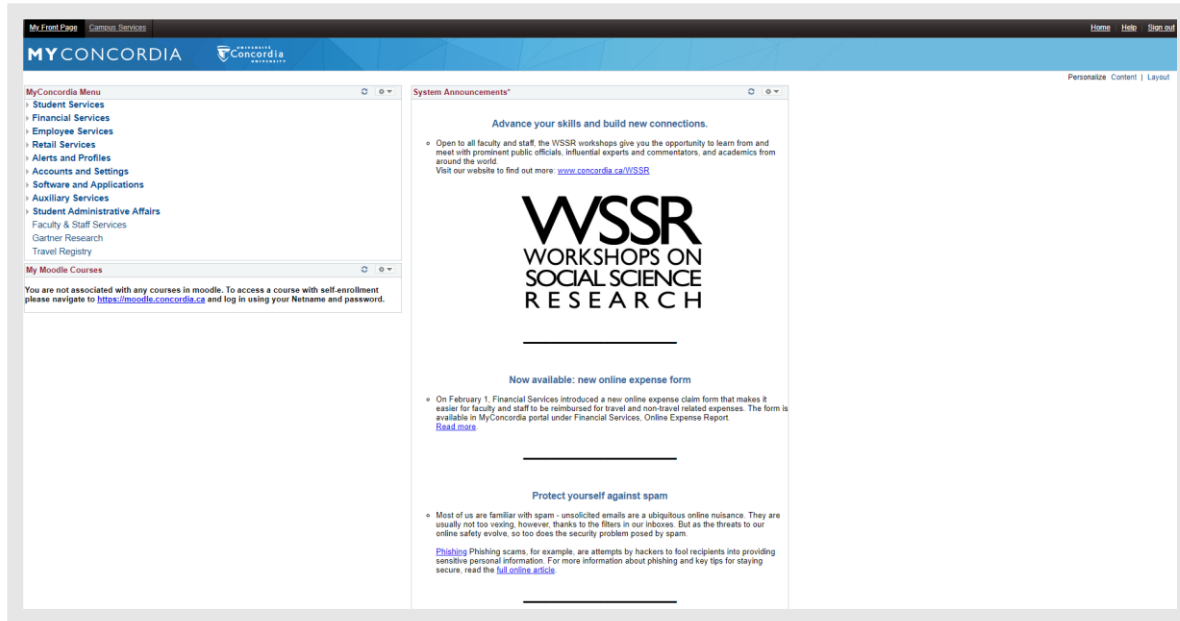
- A faculty member about faculty profile

MYCONCORDIA

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The main feedback provided by the community about MyConcordia is that its information is not structured with the end-user's profile in mind. It doesn't seem to support the user's most common tasks, such as course registration. In the end, students will often require help from staff and faculty, both in choosing what courses to register for and to complete the actual registering process. Users will eventually get used to MyConcordia, but it remains cumbersome. It is a major difficulty for new members of the community.

The community also notes that unlike Concordia.ca, MyConcordia has a dated look, which contributes to a feeling of disconnection between these two parts of the digital environment.



MYCONCORDIA

STUDENT, STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Students use MyConcordia extensively for administrative tasks, such as enrolling in courses, paying tuition, accessing tax information, etc. MyConcordia also serves as their main access point to Moodle. While it provides a lot of information, MyConcordia has the downside of feeling cluttered. Students require many clicks to complete some of their most common tasks. Like Concordia.ca, the information architecture is unintuitive. Students often need multiple attempts before finding the right section. They also report that MyConcordia is not mobile-friendly, which is a significant shortcoming for students that rely heavily on mobile devices.

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Staff members mostly use MyConcordia to access financial information and other tasks related to human resources. Like the rest of the community, they feel that the information is complete but hard to navigate. The information architecture is unintuitive. A large part of the information that is provided is not useful to their particular role and could be removed. They don't feel like the information has been structured with their specific profile in mind. New staff members have to rely on colleagues for guidance with MyConcordia.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Faculty mostly uses MyConcordia to access forms, Moodle and student information through the Student Information System (SIS). Faculty members have a similar opinion of MyConcordia to the rest of the community, especially when it comes to information architecture. They also express similar criticisms for the SIS. According to them, information is hard to find, even with extensive experience using MyConcordia.

"I find it confusing. Now I've gotten used to it so I know what to do. At first, I would get kind of lost because I find the titles on the main page when you first sign in are not that specific (...) Sometimes I'm not quite sure where to go for certain things."

- A student about MyConcordia

"It's clunky; it feels like it's from the early 2000's or something in terms of web design. It's fine but it feels very very out of date visually."

- A faculty member about MyConcordia

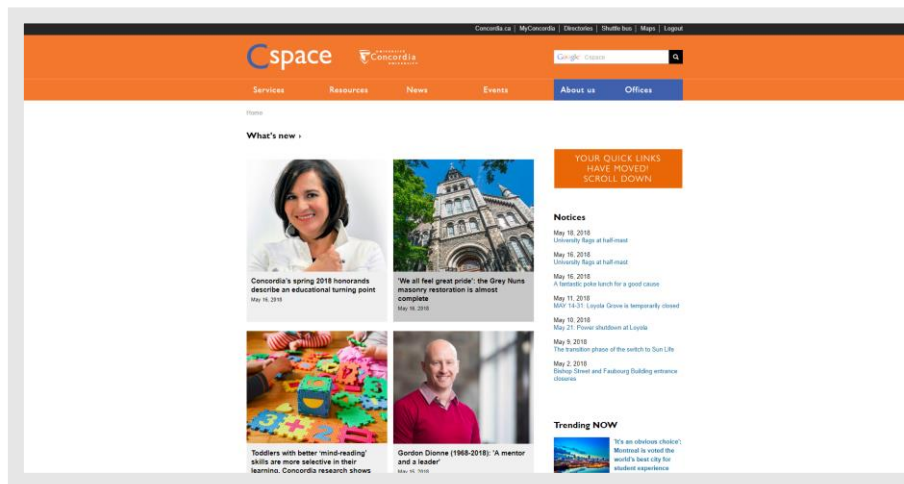
CSPACE

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Cspace is used sporadically at best. Some faculty and staff members don't use it at all. Those that do mostly use it to access forms and information related to human resources. **Because they also use MyConcordia for that type of information, there is confusion between Cspace and MyConcordia and sometimes even Concordia.ca.** The community struggles to remember which platform to use for a given task. Unless they already know where the information is, they will have to look in three different places: Cspace, MyConcordia and Concordia.ca.

A lot of public information is protected in Cspace, such as ethics guidelines. The community would expect to find that sort of public information on Concordia.ca. As such, some faculty and staff doubt the added value of Cspace in relation to MyConcordia and Concordia.ca.

As with the two other platforms, Cspace's architecture is unintuitive. Because it is used infrequently, users don't have the chance to get familiar with it and have to relearn how to use it every time they need it.



“Cspace is very frustrating (...) You never know whether if it's on the public Web or if it's on Cspace. I basically never use Cspace unless I get redirected there. I never log in to Cspace (...) If I can't find it on the main Concordia page then I'll log in to Cspace. The mental model of why something is on Cspace as opposed to not on Cspace is just missing.”

- A faculty member

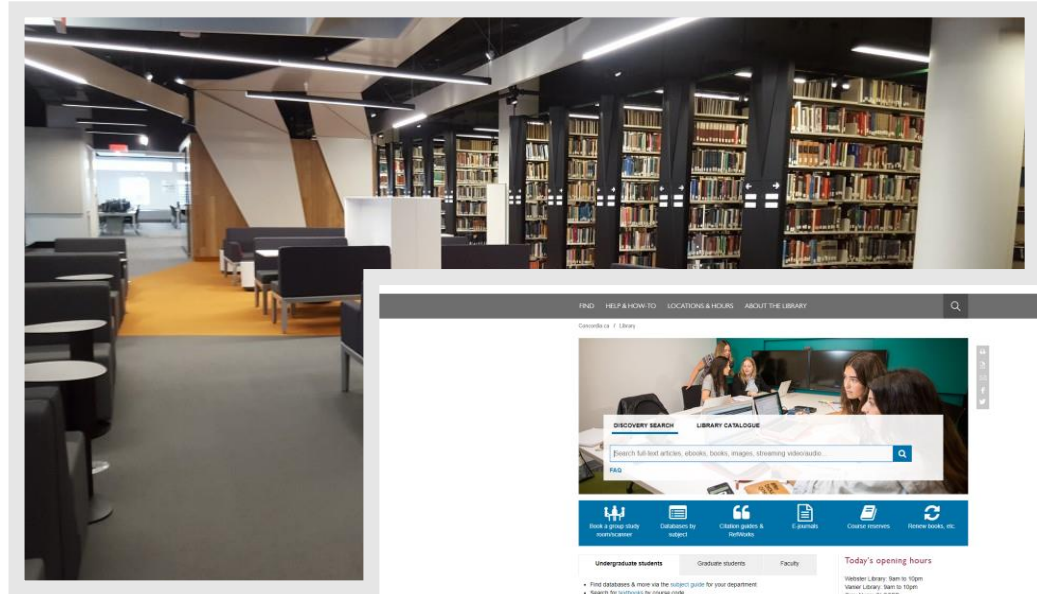
LIBRARY

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The community has shared very positive feedback on the library's physical space after renovation. It is a great place where the community can interact in person. There are few spaces of that nature at CU.

The community also greatly appreciates the digital sandbox. Of course, they love all the high technology devices that it contains. That being said, **what they appreciate the most about the sandbox is its openness.** It's not restricted to specific faculties and lets everyone experiment with the technology. Unfortunately, this is not the case with many other labs in CU, which is something that the community dislikes.

The community says the library's **online resources are accessible, useful and easy to use.**



* Picture of the library: © Concordia University, photo by Lisa Graves

LIBRARY

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Students provided very positive feedback regarding the Webster library's renovated space. They notice that the Vanier library's space is not of the same quality, but it does provide a calmer environment for studying. **Students appreciate being able to easily get devices on loan**, such as laptops and tablets. The library personnel are also accessible and helpful. The one negative comment relates to the difficulty in finding available study rooms for group projects, especially around the exam period, when space is lacking at CU.

Like the library itself, students have a positive opinion of the library's website. They feel that it is easy to use and told us **they appreciate the integrated search engine.**



The library is the part of the ecosystem students like the most. They are pleased with the space, services and resources.

"Since they've changed the setting of the library, I think it's really great. There is a lot of space and the way it looks is also really great."

- A student about the Webster library

"The library services, they are quite amazing. I appreciate the fact that they have computers and tablets to lend."

- A student about the library services

"They have a technology sandbox (...) it's open to everyone and that is actually really cool (...) It's a welcoming environment; they actually teach you how to use things (...) They do a great job at it."

- A student about the digital sandbox

"I do a lot of individual research. I use the library website for that as well as some of the databases that they have on the library website (...) I think it's pretty good (...) I find it easy to use."

- A student about the library's website

LIBRARY

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Most staff members don't use the library extensively. Those who do, have a positive opinion of it. Like students, staff shared positive feedback about the physical spaces of the Webster library. They especially like how the new library is designed with a focus on community. Despite having limited interactions with the library, many staff members view the library as having a lot of **potential in training the staff community** on information management, database management and other relevant topics.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

As for the rest of the community, faculty members appreciate the library, both in terms of physical spaces and online resources. Although not all have the opportunity to visit the physical library, **they use the online resources extensively to access academic journals, databases and online books.** In their opinion, the library website is easy to use and provides an easy access to information. They have had positive experiences with it. During discussions, this digital tool was one of the most appreciated by faculty members.

"I think the library probably has a lot of information that they could teach other departments because they are built around information management and that is something a lot of people have challenges with."

- A staff about the training potential of the library

"They've kind of taken the library and made it this more community-oriented space which I think is really interesting."

- A staff member about the renovations in the library

"I rarely come here, I think it's a real treat for students (...) This is the gift of technology, of Internet, it's to be able to download articles, to choose articles 24/7, it's a gift."

-A faculty member about the library's online resources

SOCIAL MEDIA

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

When we discussed social media with the community, we distinguished between **CU's main social media accounts** (e.g. CU on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram) and **specialized social media accounts** (e.g. ENCS, CSU, and student associations or student groups).

In general, the community favors specialized social media accounts because they can choose the accounts that provide information relevant to their needs. The main social accounts can be too broad for the community, but they do give a good overview of what is going on at CU. While the community usually follows the main social media accounts on one platform only, they usually follow multiple specialized media accounts.



CU's Facebook page (main account)



CSU's Facebook page (specialized account)

SOCIAL MEDIA

STUDENT, STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

For students, social media is a good way to find out what's going on at Concordia. They are more inclined to follow specialized accounts, such as student associations, rather than the main official CU accounts. Specialized accounts are more targeted to their interests and needs. For students, the main accounts are too broad and mostly just promote CU. They rarely provide useful information for the average student. Also, some feel there is redundancy with newsletters. All in all, main accounts are more useful for prospective students to get a feel for CU. This feedback is similar to what was said about Concordia.ca. That being said, the official accounts are useful for exceptional announcements, such as university closings. When students do follow official Concordia accounts, **they usually follow only one account (e.g., Facebook).**

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

The staff community has a similar outlook on social media at CU. The main difference is that they are more regular readers of the CU newsletter. As such, they feel that the main official social media accounts are redundant since they already receive that information through the newsletter. Thus, they are less likely than students to follow the official accounts on social media platforms.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Use of social media varies across faculty members. Some use it very little, citing lack of time and the fact that it has little use for them. Others use social media and follow official CU accounts as well as specialized accounts to know what is going at the university. They also consider it a good way to publicize research.

“I follow the accounts of some student organizations (...) definitely more like student-run things. I guess I’m much more inclined to see what my peers are up to than what the administration is putting up.”

- A student about following CU on social media

“It’s great news. I see it on the news through the Concordia news and I’ll get the emails.”

- A staff member about CU’s social media pages

“It’s rare because I work full-time.”

- A faculty member about following CU on social media

PHYSICAL SPACES AND EQUIPMENT

COMMUNITY & STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

According to the community, when it comes to physical spaces and equipment, the main priority should be to ensure that a basic level of quality is reached for CU as a whole. While quality is usually good, in some cases, it can be a major challenge.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

In general, students are satisfied with the physical spaces and equipment at CU.

They appreciate the Webster library. It's the go-to place to meet with other students, study or read. Computer labs also meet most student needs.

The main shortcoming of physical spaces is the uneven quality of these spaces across campus. While the Webster library is well liked, it can be difficult to access study rooms in other buildings. Also, the booking process for study rooms changes depending on the building and faculty, which is confusing. Some use a simple paper schedule on the door to the room, while others use an online booking process. Thus, students can have a hard time accessing lab schedules.

"I've used a lot of the study rooms to do projects and also recently they opened those presentation rooms that you can use to practice for your presentations which I think are really great (...) they are really practical."

- A student about physical spaces

"The booking system is nice. The idea is nice but it crashes a lot. Sometimes it does incomplete bookings, double bookings, even triple bookings, and security has to be involved."

- A student about booking study rooms

"There are some computer labs that are like opened if they are not in use (...) it says open for study as long as there is nobody in there but they don't put a schedule."

- A student about computer labs

PHYSICAL SPACES AND EQUIPMENT

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

The quality of physical spaces and equipment varies widely across departments, as does meeting room availability. While some staff members are very satisfied with their offices, others deal with small and dated office spaces. As for students, it is difficult to book rooms in other departments because they don't all follow the same procedure. Staff can struggle to find the right person to contact to reserve a space when organizing meetings and events.

Many staff members believe that **increased mobility and more flexible work spaces** could alleviate many of these challenges.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

As with the rest of the community, the quality of the physical spaces and equipment used by faculty varies widely. Satisfaction depends on where faculty members teach and spend most of their time. For example, faculty members mentioned that some classrooms are very dated and do not provide a good learning environment (e.g., poor lighting and poor air quality). Equipment can also be faulty at times, which interrupts the lecture.

It was also mentioned that there are **few spaces dedicated to informal interactions** between faculty members, such as faculty lounges.

"I know that I am more productive nine times out of ten at home than I am at work (...) there is no need to be there in person."

- A staff member about working remotely

"Things have improved. The new buildings are fantastic. They could have been better thought out in terms of public and hub meeting spots."

- A faculty member about physical spaces

"We need a faculty club (...) where you can go and meet people and have lunch or dinner. Most universities, especially high profile universities, have a faculty club."

- A faculty member about meeting spaces

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a dark jacket. To the right of the laptop is a white coffee cup on a saucer. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

DETAILED RESULTS

5. USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH, RESEARCH & WORK

USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH, RESEARCH & WORK

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

In nearly all cases, the community believes that the focus should be on making better use of existing technology rather than adding more technology. This requires generating more awareness of existing technology as well as increasing the resources in maintaining it and training the community in its uses.



TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOMS

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

In nearly all cases, the technology used in class is Moodle, PowerPoint presentations and a projector. This is satisfactory for most students. **The fact that some teachers don't use Moodle can be an irritant** for students, who must get used to a different way of accessing and interacting with course material. Some students have used clickers in a few courses, but haven't seen much added value in that technology.

Students believe that more technology is not the way to go to improve in-class learning. Before moving on to more advanced technology, CU should ensure that the existing technology is functional and up to date in every classroom and across all faculties. The one concrete technological improvement students mentioned is to have **lectures recorded and accessible online**. It would be useful for students when they can't attend a lecture.

Also, **pre-recorded videos would be very useful as a complement to class lectures**. For example, it could take the form of a tutorial for software that the professor does not have time to cover in class. Students also mentioned that online learning, such as what is offered through eConcordia, is a better fit for the learning style of some students. **They see online learning as having great potential for the future**.

In fact, most improvements discussed with students were not about adding more technology. They feel it would be **best to focus on fewer technologies and making sure they are used to their full potential**. Focus should also be put on making teaching more interactive, such as implementing problem-based learning. Both students and faculty told us that traditional lectures could be unengaging, especially as the number of students per class is increasing. In the end, technology should be used in classrooms only if it provides added-value. The community believes it could be helpful in eventually making classes more interactive and alleviating challenges linked to large class size.

"One of my professor from this semester was having Moodle issues and he just made his own website, and like put all our course content there."

- A student about technology in classrooms

"I think it would be useful for me to have recorded lectures."

- A student about technologies that could help

"The interactive board was so impressive (...) It's very useful of course but in Loyola, most of the rooms, they have old-fashioned equipment."

- A student about technology in classrooms

TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOMS

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

In most cases, faculty and students share a similar view of technology in classrooms. They, too, believe that the focus should be put on making classes more interactive. It would be best to focus on fewer technologies and using them to their full potential. Recording lectures for students that can't attend class would also be useful. Priority should be put on making sure all classrooms have up-to-date equipment rather than implementing additional technologies.

As students mentioned, **some faculty members prefer not to use Moodle**. They prefer to develop their own websites because it can be tailored to their specific needs. They feel that Moodle is too rigid. On the other hand, some faculty members use Moodle, but are aware that they do not use it to its full potential. They are either not aware of its full capabilities, have had a bad experience with it or just don't have time to explore it.

Some faculty members ban digital devices in class (laptop, etc.) in order to reduce distraction and encourage in-person interaction. Students usually dislike that decision because they feel these devices help them take better notes. However, students did mention that there can be many distractions in class and that in-person interaction should be increased.

When it comes to online learning, there are two schools of thought among faculty:

- Some see it as a **complement to traditional teaching**. They think it could eventually replace traditional teaching in some cases, for example with students that can't attend classes physically, students with disabilities and/or students with a learning style that is more in tune with online learning than traditional lectures.
- Others feel that there is **no substitute to in-person interaction and in-person learning**. It allows for debates and discussion that are central to the learning experience. In some cases, technology is an obstacle to learning.

"The ability to integrate tons of new technologies is ridiculous (...) it would be better to pick two or three features, or two or three technologies a year."

- A faculty member about integrating new technologies in classrooms

"Even if I'm doing all the online stuff, while they're in the classroom, I don't want them to be online (...) Some students have a really hard time with that."

-A faculty member about technology in classrooms

TECHNOLOGY IN RESEARCH & WORK

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

TECHNOLOGY IN RESEARCH – FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

The challenge related to technology in research is that faculty members have very different needs depending on their research field. This requires flexibility in terms of technology. For example, researchers dealing with digital data may need much more digital storage space than the average researcher. Others may need dedicated software solutions to manage and coordinate a delocalized research team. Thus, flexibility is a crucial dimension of the digital strategy for research, both in terms of support and technology.

TECHNOLOGY IN WORK – STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

With faculty and staff, we discussed the use of technology in their work outside of teaching or research. The conclusion is that technology is not used to its full potential in that respect. **Currently, many workflows still rely on paper, at least in part. This is inefficient and time consuming. It also restricts mobility as paper must be delivered physically.**

Also, many common tasks such as preparing spending reports, should be streamlined. These tasks require multiple steps that do not seem useful to the community. Other tasks require the use of multiple independent systems to collect the necessary information. As it is, the community feels that they are spending too much time on non-value added administrative work. This can be frustrating and demotivating for some.

“It’s really just a matter of getting the space where we can store our files, our big datasets. I’m pretty happy with the programs that I can use.”

- A faculty member about technology in research

“When we put in a grant application (...) they want you to fill out these forms and it takes a good half hour and you can’t use Safari to do it (...) this is just silly, so no, it’s not used to its full potential.”

- A faculty member about technology in work

“Maybe half of the tasks that I do are still paper-based. Paper documents need to leave my office with a signature on it and go to some other office (...) it’s still kind of shocking to me in 2018.”

- A staff member about technology in work

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a dark jacket. To the right of the laptop, there is a white coffee cup on a saucer. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or workspace. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

DETAILED RESULTS

6. INTEGRATION OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

INTEGRATION OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY, STUDENT, STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

We discussed the integration of all the elements of the digital environment and whether it offered a seamless experience or not. Overall, the community feels that it does not offer such an experience.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

For the student community, their most used technologies (MyConcordia, Moodle and Concordia.ca) feel and look very different. The visual differences are mostly an inconvenience. The different structures and different ways of using each technology are a more serious difficulty. Because students can't interact with these technologies the same way, it increases the learning curve. Unlike staff and faculty, students remain at CU for the duration of their studies and have little time to become familiar with the digital environment. As such, the learning curve takes on increased importance for the student community.

As we mentioned before, it is hard for students to find the information they're looking for unless they know where it is and have accessed it before. **The current situation is especially challenging for new students.** They have to rely on veteran students to show them the ropes. This requires building an informal network among students, which, as we've discussed earlier, is increasingly difficult.

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Staff and faculty have a similar opinion about integrating the digital environment. Every part of the environment feels and looks different. As an example, multiple generations of web pages currently coexist on the website. The community must interact with systems that work in silos, each requiring a login. This requires staff and faculty to explore each of the systems to find information.

"If everything could be like into one specific platform (...) that would be optimal for everyone I think."

- A student about integration

"I think most of our systems are all very independent of each other. There are things that we can do to have a better integration (...) A single sign in point would probably smooth things out."

- A staff member about integration

"I go to Cspace, it looks different (...) It doesn't feel like they're unified at all. It feels like they're all different platforms (...) Single login would be fantastic."

- A faculty member about integration

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a dark jacket. To the right of the laptop is a white coffee cup on a saucer. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

DETAILED RESULTS

7. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

COMMUNITY & STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

The community feels reasonably protected and trusts that the university deploys the necessary efforts to protect personal information within the digital environment. It is not something that worries the community on a day-to-day basis.

The community is also aware that this protection cannot be perfect and that most security risks lie with the user. Some members of the community mentioned that security is more of a digital skill issue than a technological issue. Indeed, most security risks come from the users' behavior and they should be properly trained to handle these risks.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Most students feel that their personal information is reasonably protected. They trust that CU deploys the necessary efforts to protect their privacy and personal information. They feel secure within the university in that respect. **As heavy social media users, students are used to sharing some information publicly. Thus, students are less concerned about information privacy than the rest of the community.** While they believe personal information protection is very important, it is not something that worries them on a day-to-day basis.

“I think that on average Concordia is doing a very good job at trying to establish a safe space for everybody in terms of either data or how people feel about themselves. I truly love that.”

- A student about personal information

“I think yes. The personal information about my courses, what I’m doing (...) it’s fine for me.”

- A student about personal information

“I don’t really care; I’m not doing anything specifically illegal (...) There is no reason for me to be concerned. It’s technology, it’s a public server.”

- A student about personal information

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Staff are not as confident as students that their personal information is being protected. There have been episodes of junk mail in the past, which have affected their confidence. In general, they are not as comfortable as students with sharing information publicly. That being said, the staff community feels that CU does a good job in protecting personal information compared to other organisations of a similar size. Like the rest of the community, personal information protection is not something that worries them on a day-to-day basis.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Like the rest of the community, faculty members are relatively confident that their personal information is being protected in the digital environment. It does not concern them on a day-to-day basis. They also mentioned that as faculty members, a lot of information is already public.

What they are more concerned about is **course material ownership**. While this does not relate directly to personal information, many faculty members expressed concerns about this topic. Specifically, when another teacher takes up a course, should the former teacher share the course material that they have built? In practice, faculty members will share the material, but are not necessarily comfortable doing so. This material is the result of a substantial amount of work and most faculty members are reluctant to give it away. This is certainly the case for part-time faculty members who are often called on to teach different courses.

“You get junk mail. I don’t know why but we did get junk mail.”

- A staff member about personal information

“It’s actually not something that I have really thought about.”

- A faculty member about personal information

“I developed a lot of these courses from scratch (...) someone else came in and they asked me if they could use my material (...) I gave everything. In that sense, all of my ten years of work is just handed on a plate.”

-A part-time faculty member about course material ownership

A grayscale photograph of a person working at a desk. The person's hands are visible, typing on a laptop keyboard. A white coffee cup is on the desk to the right. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or another person. A semi-transparent dark gray banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

DETAILED RESULTS
8. *MAIN CHALLENGES*

CURRENT CHALLENGES

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

First of all, there are varying levels of digital literacy in the community. This of course means that not all community members experience the same challenges. Since not all members are comfortable using technologies for communication, this has an effect on collaboration.

The formal onboarding process for new members of the community is lacking. They are mostly left to themselves to learn how the digital environment works. Even seasoned members mentioned learning important information several years into their experience at CU. New community members must rely on informal networks to teach them the ropes.

Many of the difficulties that the community has to deal with come from a lack of awareness rather than a lack of technology. Community members often have a problem, big or small, and have no practical way of finding out that a solution exists for that problem. They are also unaware of who can help them with their problem. As anecdotal evidence, the group discussions that took place during this project almost always ended with participants exchanging contact information to further discuss situations where one participant could help the other with a problem.

“It just seems like things are very fragmented; trying to communicate with people from other departments (...) I would say communication is probably the biggest challenge.”

- A staff member about his biggest challenge

“I didn’t know the information. If you know the information, like you should do 1-2-3-4, it’s easy. If you don’t know what to do, you miss it. I missed a lot of pre-readings because of this.”

- A student half way into his program about his biggest challenge

“I think the greatest challenge is just that nobody tells you anything about anything.”

- An experienced faculty member (>5 years) about his biggest challenge

CURRENT CHALLENGES

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

All students have to deal with the **challenge of time management**. Of course, that challenge does not come from technology. They do, however, rely on technology to help them manage their time. They use an online calendar that they access through their mobile device, usually Google or Apple.

Although students typically have a high level of digital literacy, it is incorrect to assume they are familiar with technology that is not used outside of CU or outside their specific area of study (e.g., Moodle or InDesign). Unlike the technologies they are already familiar with, these specialized technologies have a steep learning curve. It is often assumed that students are proficient with these technologies. Thus, they are not taught in class. However, knowledge of these technologies is required to complete assignments. This is especially problematic for new and international students, who have to rely on informal student mentors to show them the ropes.

There is no standardized onboarding process for new students. Once again, they often have to rely on veteran students to guide them at the beginning of their program. Even veteran students sometimes learn about a valuable piece of information many semesters into their studies.

As a general rule, students want to be autonomous in their information search, which means that the online environment must provide up-to-date information that is easy to access. However, when they are anxious about a more complex issue, they need to be able to reach out to the right person. As mentioned before, finding the right person can be challenging.

“I would say planning my time efficiently, which also has to do with the fact that I get myself involved with too many things.”

- A student about his biggest challenge

“Adapting to the technology in my program because it is very technology-centric, like learning all the software, learning the physical technologies (...) and also time management.”

- A student about his biggest challenge

“As a student specifically, it’s adapting to university lifestyle because no one tells you what to do (...) You have to be completely self-driven and that was a bit of an adjustment.”

- An international student about his biggest challenge

CURRENT CHALLENGES

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

All staff members deal with the **challenge of information management**. As mentioned earlier, staff members spend a lot of time looking for information across the digital environment. This challenge - coupled with rigid administrative processes - can make even mundane tasks very time consuming. As a solution, the staff community has learned to use workarounds extensively. These workarounds, however, are temporary solutions. They can become obsolete as the environment changes.

Collaboration is also a challenge for staff, especially through digital channels. Different teams and departments may use different technologies for collaboration, which causes compatibility issues. Also, the varying levels of digital literacy across the community mean that not all staff members are as comfortable in using collaboration technologies.

Limited resources, both in terms of budget and human resources, make it challenging to meet the needs of the expanding community. It also causes some technologies to be inadequately maintained and not used to their full potential.

“It’s so process-heavy (...) I’m kind of caught between the processes and the demand on the other side (...) It’s definitely one of the greatest challenges, so that and working around existing structure.”

- A staff member about his biggest challenge

“There is no uniformity of understanding or ability. We all suffer from this and that is probably part of what makes the whole digitalization telecommuting dream so elusive; unevenness of users’ abilities.”

- A staff member about his biggest challenge with collaboration

“To me, the challenge is just finding positive ways to improve things within existing financial limits.”

- A staff member about his biggest challenge

CURRENT CHALLENGES

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

The main challenge faculty faces is time. Administrative processes can be inefficient, rigid and time consuming. They take away from other responsibilities. Managing budgets through Millennium is especially difficult; both in actually entering budget data and in understanding how much budget is effectively available.

Increasingly, additional pressure comes from the number of students per class. Faculty members have to deal with more students with equal or decreasing resources.

Getting familiar with a new course is also a very challenging task. It requires large amounts of preparation time. Unfortunately, teachers are sometimes made aware of a new course load on very short notice. This situation is more frequent with part-time faculty and newer full-time faculty.

“Everything consumes time and that’s basically it. My time is kind of a scarce resource.”

- A faculty member about his biggest challenge

“We have a problem that nobody wants to talk about, we accept more and more students per class.”

- A faculty member about his biggest challenge

“The most difficult (...) is teaching a new course. That is always very very difficult and I think every professor has this. I did so much of it because of the part-time (...) In the first like 6-7 years, I had taught nine different courses which is insane and it’s painful.”

- A part-time faculty member about his biggest challenge

FUTURE CHALLENGES

COMMUNITY AND STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Keeping up to date and staying relevant will be the greatest challenge for the community. This will involve different things for each subsection of the community, but all will have to deal with a level of uncertainty.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

The increasing focus on digital interactions can have a negative impact on some aspects of the student experience. Students find it increasingly harder to build in-person relationships with other students. Many interactions have now moved online. Classrooms, in which most interactions should take place, do not favor personal interaction. There are now few opportunities for students to create new relationships. In fact, students told us that technology is great at maintaining existing relationships, but not so great at creating new ones. This is an important challenge for new or international students, who have to build a new network when they arrive at CU. This has negative consequences outside the social sphere as well, since important information is currently transmitted through informal networks.

“I think it’s a complete shift in how people perceive education and how people go into education. There are ways to make individuals that want to learn for the rest of their life and want to better themselves.”

- A student about his future challenge

“I feel like meeting people is kind of hard in a big school and I think that it will hopefully get easier (...) I noticed amongst myself and my group of friends there is kind of a push against technology and wanting to use technology less and engage more without it.”

- A student from another province about his future challenge

“I feel like networking skills will be a challenge for me because of culture conflicts. I need to keep improving.”

- An international student about his future challenge

FUTURE CHALLENGES

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

As students progress with their studies at CU, choosing the right courses or course sequence will continue to be a challenge. These decisions have significant consequences. It's hard for them to get the right information to inform their decision, such as their program's requirements or a detailed overview of each course's content. The best way to make the best decision is to meet with faculty in person. That means finding the right professor or advisor to reach out to. Even finding that person can be difficult; information is not always accessible or up to date.

When they graduate, students expect to be up to date with the industry. In many faculties, that means being proficient with the technology that is standard within the industry. This technology is not always available to students. When accessible, it is usually through a dedicated lab, which in practice limits access for many reasons; too much demand during the exam period, limited opening hours or having to manage file transfers from the computer lab to their own computer. Faculty also struggles with this as budget cannot always cover licensing fees for the standard industry software. They must fall back on older software that are no longer the industry standard.

“Trying to figure out which courses I needed (...) that was my biggest challenge. The second one would be finding teachers I can learn with (...) Trying to finish my degree, that's top priority.”

- A student about his current and future challenge

“I'm thinking of doing a research project as an undergraduate so it would be networking with the professors themselves, looking for a research idea that is viable and can be conducted.”

- A student about his future challenge

“My greatest challenge will be the new technologies that are coming.”

- A student about his future challenge

FUTURE CHALLENGES

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

In the future, the staff community anticipates that its main challenge will be to stay up to date with technology as it continues to evolve rapidly. For the staff community as a group, this also means reaching a more homogeneous level of digital literacy. This is crucial in reaching a greater level of collaboration and efficiency.

The staff community will also have to navigate through future major transformations within CU and the higher education sphere in general. This will without a doubt involve a change in how technology is used, but is also likely to involve other aspects of how the university functions. The staff community hopes to be able to rely on clear guidance and focus from CU through these changes.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

As with the rest of the community, faculty members will have to stay up to date with new technology, both to stay relevant in their field of expertise and to keep up with the technology that students use. They also expect to have to deal with budgets, time and infrastructure constraints, while teaching an increasing number of students. In the end, the main challenge of faculty members will be to continue to offer a meaningful experience to students through engaging and interactive courses and by giving them the resources to continue learning their whole life, all in a context that is difficult to predict.

“As I am looking forward to get something that is related to my studies (...) my main challenge that I have to cope with (...) is to get those skills in the near future so I will be admissible to such kinds of job positions.”

- A staff member and student about his future challenge

“It’s not just your degree; it’s the ability to continue learning. It would be great if we had some digital technology that enabled lifelong learning for me to continue feeding students this information.”

- A faculty member about his future challenge

“I think one of the things will be finding the common ground among students, having points of reference to talk about.”

- A faculty member about his future challenge

A grayscale photograph of a person working at a desk. The person is wearing a denim jacket and is holding a pen in their right hand while typing on a laptop keyboard with their left hand. A white coffee cup on a saucer is visible on the desk to the right of the laptop. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source. A semi-transparent dark gray horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

DETAILED RESULTS

9. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

METHODOLOGY & SCALE

In the first phase of the public consultations (group discussions), we identified areas of improvement CU may want to consider in the future. These areas emerged from the challenges and improvement suggestions shared by the community. In the second and third phases of the public consultations (individual interviews and creative workshops), we submitted these ten areas of improvement to the community and collected their feedback on each.

They were rated on an importance scale of 1 to 10, where 1 signifies “not at all important” and 10 signifies “very important.” This project being essentially a qualitative research endeavor (45 community members participated in the individual rating), rating results are shown for illustrative purposes only. The rating scale was used first and foremost to focus the discussion. After they rated the ten areas of improvement, we asked participants to pick the **three most important**.

In addition to rating the importance of each area of improvement, participating community members were asked to comment on them. They were also asked if they could think of concrete ways CU could improve each area. To avoid repetition, only new information that is not covered earlier in this report is discussed in this section.



AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS IN PHASE 2 & 3

The following areas of improvement emerged from group discussions and were presented to participants during individual interviews and creative workshops*:

COLLABORATION

encourage in-person and online collaboration by providing a platform to help people connect (chat, share resources, find people based on their research interests, etc.).

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

make sure that the community can easily find out what is going on at Concordia (events, research, trainings, workshops, new initiatives, etc.).

CONSOLIDATION

make everything accessible from one single place (tools, information, etc.).**

SUPPORT

provide technical support available at all times to help with technology.

FLEXIBILITY

give more freedom to individuals and/or departments to choose their technology (digital tools, collaborative tools, etc.) and manage their web presence.

PHYSICAL SPACES AND EQUIPMENT

make physical spaces (e.g., smart rooms) and quality equipment (e.g., up-to-date computers) available to the whole community.

MOBILITY

allow people to work and access what they need anywhere at any time.

DIGITAL SKILLS

offer more resources and workshops to help develop digital skills.

FEEDBACK

collect feedback from the community on a regular basis to see what they want and need (with in-person meetings and/or using online discussion tools).

PERSONAL INFORMATION

increase security in the digital environment and provide assistance with legal issues related to personal information as needed (e.g., to film a class/event).

* Areas of improvement were presented to participants with descriptions.

** This area of improvement was named “Centralization” in Phase 1. We renamed it for the second and third phases based on discussions with CU.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

IMPORTANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY

	STUDENTS	STAFF	FACULTY
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	8.8	9.3	7.1
FEEDBACK	7.9	8.7	7.6
PHYSICAL SPACES AND EQUIPMENT	7.8	8.8	7.8
COLLABORATION	8.3	9.2	6.3
MOBILITY	8.8	7.4	7.5
DIGITAL SKILLS	7.5	9.2	6.9
SUPPORT	7.7	8.2	7.4
FLEXIBILITY	7.1	8.0	7.6
PERSONAL INFORMATION	7.4	7.9	7.6
CONSOLIDATION	7.3	7.8	6.9

* Rating on an importance scale of 1 to 10, where 1 signifies “not at all important” and 10 signifies “very important”

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

TOP 3 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

In general, the community considered all areas of improvement as important for the future. Thus, participants gave high scores to most elements. After they rated each area of improvement, we asked them to pick the three most important for them personally.

	STUDENTS	STAFF	FACULTY
#1	INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	COLLABORATION	FLEXIBILITY
#2	COLLABORATION	INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	MOBILITY
#3	FEEDBACK	CONSOLIDATION, FLEXIBILITY & FEEDBACK (three-way tie)	CONSOLIDATION & SUPPORT (two-way tie)

* Results are based on the number of times each area of improvement was chosen as a top 3 area of improvement for the future. / ** The top 3 areas of improvement might not exactly reflect the rating results on the previous page since participants picked their top 3 after they rated each area of improvement. At this point, they had discussed each of them with the moderator.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

DISCUSSION ON COLLABORATION

The staff and faculty community feels that there should be more resources, equipment and space sharing across departments. This could improve both the performance and efficiency of the community. It would also facilitate the sharing of best practices and solutions to specific problems within the entire community. Collaboration is limited by the knowledge of what others do and what their expertise is. Thus, collaboration is linked to how information is disseminated across the community. Currently, it is mostly disseminated informally.

According to the community, the solution to improving collaboration won't come from the addition of another technology. Some technologies that Concordia currently uses could be better leveraged for collaboration. It's better to fix existing technologies or raise awareness of their existence than create or purchase new technologies. The multiplication of collaboration technologies within CU is actually an obstacle to collaboration.

Collaboration technologies that the community already knows how to use should be prioritized. A balance could be struck between the commercial technologies that the community already uses (e.g. Slack, Facebook, Google) and institutional technologies.

“It’s a shame because I know a lot of the part-timers that I talked with are really knowledgeable, skillful, successful people, and often there isn’t much of a collaboration. It could be interesting to collaborate in terms of course content, this sort of thing, collaboration could be improved.”

- A part-time faculty member about collaboration

“What collaborations between researchers are we missing, and between profs, and between employees? (...) I have no idea what expertise we have (...) I don’t know who to ask or how to ask it. Could we have forums or discussion bases?”

- A staff member about collaboration

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

DISCUSSION ON CONSOLIDATION & MOBILITY

CONSOLIDATION

Consolidation is viewed more positively by students than it is by staff and faculty. As consumers of information rather than providers, most of their common tasks would be made easier by having centralized platforms. This is especially true of students coming from the CEGEP system, who have gotten used to the Omnivox app that centralizes the most important information.

For faculty and staff, consolidation is a double-edged sword. While consolidation of systems and procedures can make accessing information easier, it can introduce barriers and bottlenecks. Reducing silos and increasing information sharing across systems would be a good step in achieving greater consolidation. Standardization, as well as streamlining of administrative processes, rather than consolidation, would be beneficial according to the faculty and staff.

MOBILITY

All three groups believe that mobility should be facilitated. This could alleviate challenges linked to physical spaces. To enable greater mobility, reliance on VPN to access CU resources should be reduced. Wi-Fi quality should also be ensured across campus so that members of the community can access online resources reliably everywhere on campus.

“It was kind of confusing when I was first showing up here, like why isn’t there just one website where everything is together?”

- A student about centralization

“My thing about centralization is that I think we need to have structures to inform how decisions are made but we do need to understand that there are all unique issues in all the different areas and things can’t be so rigid.”

- A staff member about centralization

“That is important because so many people have to work while traveling. Researchers are going to conferences all the time.”

- A staff member about mobility

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

DISCUSSION ON FLEXIBILITY & FEEDBACK

FLEXIBILITY

Throughout the public consultations, it became obvious that departments and faculties each have their own realities. One size does not fit all. **Staff and faculty value flexibility. It reduces bottlenecks, especially when managing web presence.** By disseminating expertise and delegating responsibilities, the community would not be as reliant on central services. This would allow for more agility and flexibility. As mentioned earlier, the community has learned to use workarounds to deal with ineffective structures and processes. In a way, they have introduced their own flexibility in the digital environment. In the end, they recommend more departmental flexibility, not more individual flexibility.

FEEDBACK

The community believes that CU has organized valuable feedback initiatives in the past. The process leading up to the Webster library renovations is a good example of this. **While the community is aware that CU collects feedback, they believe that follow-up is lacking.** This creates a feeling that the community's feedback is not acted upon. To improve follow-up, participants have suggested communicating the results of feedback initiatives as well as the envisioned next steps.

The community believes that feedback is also lacking in the technology selection process. They believe that many technologies were introduced with little or no involvement of the end user. This resulted in technologies that do not effectively support the user's needs and most common tasks. Put simply, these technologies are unintuitive and hard to use for students, staff and faculty.

“Give us the freedom and the flexibility, give us the resources but without imposing too much (...) it's all about surviving in the digital world and that means being aware of the students' preferences (...) if you see that they don't like Moodle, just drop it and give us the server space, and then let us have chats on Facebook.”

- A faculty member about flexibility and feedback

“Why do people use this? What are the most common uses? Let's rethink how we organize content 100%.”

- A staff member about feedback on MyConcordia

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

DISCUSSION ON INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

At the moment, information dissemination among the community is lacking. The community must rely on unofficial or informal channels (fellow students, colleagues, etc.) for important information. This means that community members regularly miss important information. They are mostly unaware of what resources and technologies are available to them. They eventually find out about them later in their experience at CU through trial and error. A solution to your problem may have been found in another faculty, but you'll never know about it. The community also often misses out on events that would have interested them.

Information dissemination is uniquely challenging. While the community feels that information dissemination is lacking, they also feel that they're overloaded with information. They eventually tune out because they receive a great deal of information that is not relevant to them. This issue may get worse over time as the community increasingly tunes out.

In the end, the community told us the main problem does not come from a lack of information, but rather that the **relevant information is hard to find**. This is a major difficulty for new members of the community who are not familiar with the CU digital environment.

“There is a lot of nested information. The way that I have found things is really by asking colleagues where to find information.”

- A new staff member about information diffusion

“I think in the first term or even the second term I didn't come to a lot of events because I was not following some of the pages, because I wasn't even aware that those things happened (...) The events, research, trainings, workshops, initiatives, updated information could really help.”

- A grad student about information diffusion

“The emails I'm getting right now they don't benefit me (...) but the stuff I actually do and most students care about, nobody knows about.”

- An undergrad student about information diffusion

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

DISCUSSION ON SUPPORT

In most cases, the community is satisfied with the current support provided. On the other hand, more specialized support, such as what is required by researchers, is difficult to find.

The community is increasingly exposed to **live chat** support through their activities outside of CU. They believe it could improve support flexibility as well as mobility.

The community also shared suggestions to reduce support requests. **Video tutorials** could be produced for the most common problems encountered by the community. The same method could also be used to help the community develop their digital skills at their convenience.

The community also thinks that support is currently very important because many technologies at CU are not user-friendly. User-experience and ease-of-use should have more weight in platform selection. They feel that technologies are selected based on their features without much regard for the user experience they provide. After all, the community interacts with easy-to-use technologies in their personal lives. They have come to expect the same from CU.

“They are pretty good. Every time I have a problem, I get answered and they fix it.”

- A faculty member about support

“I suppose it’s always been in general lack of support (...) no support for anything IT related that you want to do in teaching and research.”

- A faculty member about his greatest challenge

“When I received my admission, before registering for courses, there was a video we had to watch about how to register for courses. That’s a good one. I think they could add other videos about how to schedule a math tutor, how to pay your tuition...”

- An international student about support

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a dark jacket and has long hair. A white coffee cup is visible on the right side of the desk. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or study environment. A semi-transparent dark gray banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

DETAILED RESULTS

10. VISION OF THE NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY

VISION OF THE NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITY & STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

We asked community members to share their vision of the next-generation university. They were told not to worry about feasibility or how realistic their vision was.

Surprisingly, the whole community believes the next-generation university will not have more technology, but will make better use of the technology it already has.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

For students, the learning experience is the aspect that will undergo the most significant changes. Above of all, **the next-generation university will have classes that are more interactive**, meaning it will involve more interactions between students and between students and teachers. It will move away from the standard lecture format. Technology may help support that shift, but its use should not be forced in the classroom.

Students also expect that **online learning will become more prevalent**, especially as a complement to in-class learning. It would not necessarily replace traditional in-class learning, but could cover topics that can't be covered in class.

A next-generation university would also systematically record lectures. This would improve the learning experience for those who can't attend class. It could broaden the reach of CU to students outside Montreal. It could also alleviate the important challenge mentioned by faculty of the increasing number of students per classroom.

"I like to come back to the lectures (...) I feel like it could be structured differently. Right now, it is PowerPoint, it is as far as it goes, but maybe it could be sort of a problem-based lesson in general."

- A student about the next-generation university

"I'd like to say more online courses for some aspects. There are some classes that could just be done online, or at least offer an online option where you have physical classes and online classes."

- A student about the next-generation university

"Live feed to lectures, the chat function, would change things (...) It's going to benefit the students and it's going to benefit the prof as well. As regard to the chat part of that, you need to be able to ask questions."

- A student about the next-generation university

VISION OF THE NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY

STAFF & FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

For the staff community, the next-generation university will revolve around collaboration and information sharing. This would require a basic level of digital literacy within the community. In the next-generation university, the community will have better knowledge of what other people do at the university. Once again, this is a requirement for more collaboration and information sharing.

In the end, the next-generation university does not require more technology; it requires existing technology to be more accessible. The next-generation university will focus on maintenance and awareness of existing technology.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

For the faculty community, the next-generation university will offer more freedom. It won't have a corporate mentality with an emphasis on the number of students, performance as measured by metrics, top-down decision making, etc. It will be multidisciplinary; students won't be limited to one faculty and collaboration will cross the faculty silos. The next-generation university will achieve a balance between the individual's freedom to use their preferred technology and a level of coherence across the university. This will require a more adaptable structure than what is currently in place at CU.

For faculty, the next-generation university is not about having more technology; it's about a better use of existing technology. It will minimize digital waste, meaning it will not invest in a technology it cannot afford to maintain and effectively implement.

“Without spending significant amounts of money, it should be taking a good look at the suite of digital and technological tools in which it already invested in and making a colossal effort to simply use them.”

- A staff member about the next-generation university

“I really want to see collaboration. We are all here for the students. We are all here for further learning. We are all here for the community and I think we have to remind ourselves of that a lot.”

- A staff member about the next-generation university

“There is no agility here (...) We have massive silos at Concordia.”

- A faculty member about the next-generation university

VISION OF THE NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY

SUMMARY

A NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY WILL...

- ✓ Be human-centered
- ✓ Get the basics right
- ✓ Prioritize usefulness over flashiness
- ✓ Be flexible
- ✓ Consult broadly and consider users' needs in all decisions
- ✓ Be searchable
- ✓ Inspire digital literacy in the community
- ✓ Make training appealing

A NEXT-GENERATION UNIVERSITY WILL NOT...

- × Overload with information
- × Overlook any user group
- × Separate the digital from the overall university experience
- × Try to solve all problems
- × Try to resolve human problems with technology
- × Create digital waste
- × Create new tools that can't be maintained

An overhead view of five people sitting around a round white table in a study or meeting. They are looking at books, laptops, and papers. The table is cluttered with various items like smartphones, sticky notes, and pens. The background is a light-colored, textured floor.

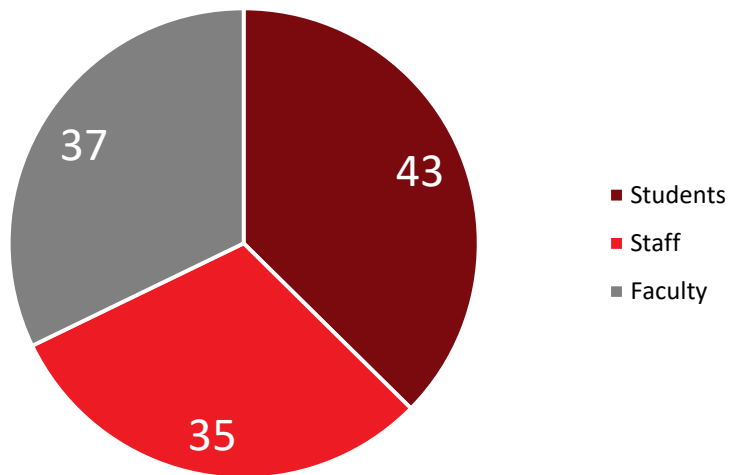
PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

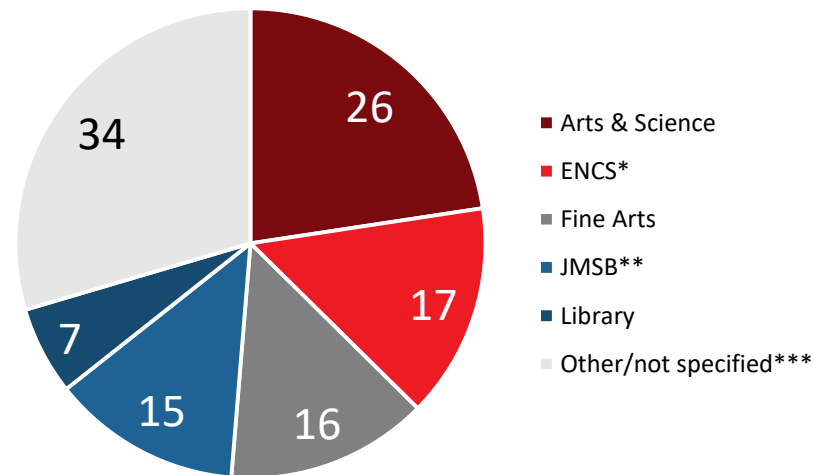
OVERALL PROFILE

TOTAL	GROUP DISCUSSIONS	INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	CREATIVE WORKSHOPS
115 participants	51 participants	45 participants	19 participants

COMMUNITY GROUP



FACULTY



* Engineering and Computer Sciences / ** John Molson School of Business / ***Mostly staff members who work with all or several faculties.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

PHASE 1 – GROUP DISCUSSIONS

16 STUDENTS

FACULTY

Arts & Science	4
ENCS	3
Fine Arts	3
JMSB	4
Other/not specified	2

STATUS

Full-time	13
Part-time	3

SEMESTERS COMPLETED

1 or 2	7
3 or 4	4
5 or more	5

19 STAFF

YEARS OF SERVICE

<5 years	7
5 to 10 years	6
>10 years	6

16 FACULTY

STATUS

Full-time	10
Part-time	6

FACULTY

Arts & Sciences	3
ENCS	3
Fine Arts	3
JMSB	3
Library	4



TOTAL

51 participants

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

PHASE 2 – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

20 STUDENTS

PROGRAM

Undergraduate	15
Graduate	5

FACULTY

Arts & Science	9
ENCS	4
Fine Arts	4
JMSB	3

STATUS

Full-time	16
Part-time	4

PROGRESSION IN THE PROGRAM

First year	5
Middle years	9
Last year	6

OTHER CRITERIA

International students	6
Students with a disability	6

10 STAFF

STATUS

Full-time	7
Part-time	3

EXPERIENCE

<3 years	5
>5 years	5

GROUP

Academic group	3
Research group	3
Administrative group	4

POSITION

Manager	3
Professional	3
Support/Technical	4

15 FACULTY

STATUS

Full-time	10
Part-time	5

FACULTY

Arts & Sciences	5
ENCS	3
Fine Arts	2
JMSB	3
Library	2

MAIN FOCUS

Research Focus	7
Teaching Focus	8

TOTAL

45 participants



* Information provided by CU

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

PHASE 3 – CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

	19 PARTICIPANTS	7 STUDENTS	6 STAFF	6 FACULTY
FACULTY				
Arts & Science	5	3	-	2
ENCS	2	1	-	1
Fine Arts	4	1	2	1
JMSB	4	2	1	1
Library	1	-	-	1
Other/not specified	3	-	3	-
GROUP				
Administrative	6	-	6	-
Research	2	-	-	2
Other/not specified	11	7	-	4



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