

# SEASON OF GIVING

Meeting the needs of today and preparing for future challenges



## Concordia cements its position as Canada's next-gen university

Concordia president Graham Carr with a group of students outside the university's Science Hub. CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

In an era of unprecedented change ranging from disruptive new technologies to the drive for sustainability, universities are facing the growing challenge of how to prepare students for success in a rapidly transforming world.

For Montreal's Concordia University, it means determining what that success looks like and identifying the strategies to achieve it in an initiative aimed at cementing the institution's position as Canada's next-generation university.

To support the transformation, the university has launched the Campaign for Concordia. Next-Gen. Now, its most ambitious fundraising initiative ever. The campaign is on track to raise more than \$300-million to coincide with the university's 50th anniversary in 2024-25.

Graham Carr, Concordia's president, says a next-gen university is a vibrant and innovative institution that can adapt during an era of disruption to respond to the grand challenges society faces, offer its

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**Gina Cody**

Co-chair Campaign for Concordia



students exciting experiential learning opportunities and responsibly steward the donations that are enabling the campaign's ambitious objectives.

Prof. Carr says Concordia is building on its existing strengths including the accomplishments of its Centre for Cybersecurity, the largest university-based cybersecurity lab in Canada; its renowned Faculty of Fine Arts; and the Institute for the Urban and Built Environment where cross-disciplinary collaboration is reimagining urban living.

"Philanthropy allows us to dream bigger and accomplish more by helping us support students in the form of academic scholarships and fellowships and initiate innovative research programs. It can be a real difference-maker in taking public education in Canada beyond the good place where it exists today, to something far more ambitious," he says.

The difference a scholarship can make is evident in the life journey of Concordia alumna Gina Cody, who

established a successful career and leadership role in the engineering sector and was one of the early donors to the Campaign for Concordia.

The university recognized her \$15-million donation and her achievements in the engineering sector by renaming its engineering and computer science faculty the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science.

Ms. Cody is now a co-chair of the campaign with business leaders and philanthropists Andrew Molson and Lino Saputo Jr.

"I came to Canada from Iran during the revolution with only \$2,000 in my pocket and [Concordia] provided me with a scholarship. That moment of kindness and giving to a young woman changed my life and set me up for success," says Ms. Cody. "When I became successful, I wanted to get back to my roots and create a platform for those who are coming after me. The naming [of the faculty] is not about me, it's about it being named for a woman. When I see

the young women who enter the university, they speak about it. They say now they feel they belong, that they are accepted – that's the thing that is really near and dear to my heart."

Ms. Cody believes there are three chapters in life.

"The first, being cherished by your parents, teachers, professors and everybody else, then the second chapter – I call it the 'me chapter' – it's all about ourselves and making a life, our business, our children. And then the third chapter is the giving back chapter to complete the circle, because I wouldn't be where I am if many people before me had not paved the road for me and paid it forward," she says.

Ms. Cody notes that half of Canada's population is made up of women and Canadian society is a mix of cultures. She says the values of equity, diversity and inclusion are not just ethically right, they are a proven smart business practice, and she wants to encourage more successful women to give to institutions like Concordia.

Concordia vice-president of advancement Paul Chesser says approximately two-thirds of the funds raised so far for the campaign are from individuals – the university's alumni, their friends, families and other supporters – while one-third is from corporate donations and large philanthropic foundations.

As a relatively young university, Concordia continues to build a base of support, Mr. Chesser says.

"The university is coming into its own, and the opportunity to support the campaign can blaze a new trail and start a tradition of giving for future generations," he says.

With a healthy cohort of international students, the campaign is also engaging graduates who are leaders in places such as Silicon Valley, Hollywood and financial capitals like New York, London and Toronto, says Mr. Chesser, pointing to the decades-old alumni association in Hong Kong as an example.

"We've got leaders in every facet of society around the world, and through the Campaign for Concordia we want to reconnect and engage with all of them," he says.

For more information, visit [concordia.ca/campaign](https://concordia.ca/campaign)



# Thank you!

Thank you to our **10,000 donors** for contributing to our university's success — and the success of our **51,000 students** — by giving to the **Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen**. Now over the last year.

Learn more and support the Campaign for Concordia: [concordia.ca/campaign](https://concordia.ca/campaign)

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## WHY THE PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY ARE INFLUENCING TRENDS IN PHILANTHROPY

While the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency are grabbing the headlines, they are also exposing and amplifying fault lines in society, magnifying the needs of communities and the causes that charities and the non-profit sector support.

"The pandemic has shone a light on the critical role charities play in delivering essential services and addressing some of the greatest challenges of our time," says Krishan Mehta, assistant vice president of engagement at Ryerson University and a past president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Greater Toronto Chapter.

"Charities have been thrown many curveballs since early 2020," he says, noting that as people have had to consider their own immediate needs during the pandemic, they are also compelled to give to urgent appeals in addition to causes that they have supported for many years.

"We have also seen that many communities can be forged through digital and mobile technologies. We are hyper-connected now and able to communicate needs quickly, with urgency. But we mustn't forget that many people still don't have access to these technologies," he says.

Dr. Mehta believes the pandemic and the climate emergency relate to many other issues that engage the charitable sector including gender

inequality, housing, food security, access to education and health care, and Indigenous reconciliation.

"Many of these issues are intertwined. For example, climate-related migration will likely place huge pressures on settlement and refugee non-profits," he says. "One of the other major lessons over the past couple of years is that we can no longer treat the climate emergency or the pandemic as separate issues, but part of the web of problems that many charities are addressing."

As an example, the Royal Ontario Museum recently announced a donor-funded curatorship in climate change.

"How interesting for an organization that's often perceived as a cultural institution to take on this very timely agenda item for themselves," says Dr. Mehta.

Similarly, he says, universities are convening conversations on the issue of the climate emergency, activating students and seeing how alumni can advance this issue through giving.

"Education certainly plays a vital role in helping address many of the crises that we're experiencing," he adds.

Celeste Bannon Waterman, partner at KCI Philanthropy, a consulting firm that works in the non-profit sector, says she hasn't yet seen a significant

increase in climate-related philanthropy.

"I think many donors have still been focused on pandemic relief and are now shifting to recovery and causes that may have been given less priority than others. Going forward, I expect there may be some increase in climate philanthropy, particularly for research and climate-emergency relief," she says.

Ms. Bannon Waterman notes studies and experience indicate that younger donors are more likely to cite the environment and climate as one of their philanthropic priorities.

"But older donors are more likely to have the resources to give, and I'm seeing many older donors thinking about climate and their own legacy. I think we'll see increasing gifts from donors of all ages in future," she says.

Jennifer Gillivan, president and CEO of the IWK Foundation in Nova Scotia and chair of the Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations (CCHF) board, says the pandemic has led people to re-examine their own values.

"Issues surfaced around Black Lives Matter, Indigenous reconciliation, LGBTQ rights, women's rights and children's rights, and mental health and forced people to look at those cracks. As a result, we are seeing a realignment of values," she says.

Ms. Gillivan says the philanthropy sector is seeing more partnerships with many donors seeking to make a bigger impact in real time. One example is a recent \$26-million donation by the Thistle Foundation (established by Fiona McKean and Tobias Lütke, CEO of Shopify) to CCHF, an organization that raises funds for 13 of Canada's children's hospitals.

"The donation enabled the Thistle Foundation to work with one organization and make an immediate impact across Canada as \$2-million was allocated to each acute care children's hospital to meet locally identified needs," she says.

Another example is the Colin and Belle MacDonald Foundation's \$2-million donation, inspired by the A Family of Support: Child and Youth Mental Health Initiative campaign, a fundraising partnership between CCHF, the Sobeys Foundation and Sobeys Inc., focused on improving mental health services for children and youth.

"Children represent 25 per cent of our population and 100 per cent of our future. There has never been a time in our collective history when supporting their health and mental health has been so needed and so necessary," says Ms. Gillivan.

As the charitable and non-profit sector emerges from the pandemic, Ms. Bannon Waterman anticipates charities will continue to focus on fundraising strategies that have worked well during the pandemic, particularly personal relationship-based fundraising.

"I also expect they will continue to invest in digital engagement and fundraising. Online gaming and 50/50 lotteries will also continue to

be a strategy used by many charities, but I expect the funds raised through this area will decline somewhat as we come out of the pandemic," she says.

Ms. Bannon Waterman adds that the pandemic has given many people a chance to step back and think about their priorities and realize that helping others in their own communities and around the world has become more important.

"We've seen a lot of people focus more on giving than on 'stuff,' and I think that will translate into even more people giving this year than ever before, and at greater levels from those who have the resources to do so," she says.

## MUSEUM TACKLES TEXTILES' SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

With financial support from both private and public-sector donors, the Toronto-based Textile Museum of Canada is helping build awareness of the need for a more sustainable and environmentally acceptable use of textile products.

Founded in 1975, the museum has grown to become a highly regarded incubator for artistic practice, research and education, with a global collection of over 15,000 textiles.

In 2020, the museum began a program to educate consumers on the importance of reusing textiles and reducing waste. This led to the creation of the Textile Learning Hub, which provides visitors with immersive, experiential and hands-on learning opportunities that highlight issues around environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Leah Sanchez, the museum's head of programs and outreach, says the global textile industry has a significant impact on the environment, ranging from unsustainable production to labour injustices. However, companies around the world have begun shifting towards environmentally friendly alternatives

to harmful practices, and consumers are making better choices that lessen their impact on the environment.

"The textile industry must take the lead in mitigating the climate emergency by working towards a closed-loop material cycle and producing ethical and sustainable textiles," says Ms. Sanchez. "As consumers, we have the power to reduce our carbon footprint by shopping locally, finding creative ways to reuse and upcycle old garments and being informed about where and how our products are made."

The museum's education initiatives have included the Life Cycle of a Textile school program supported by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, online conversations featuring fashion designers and researchers exploring the themes of fashion, sustainability and design under the program series Social Being, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund; and monthly Sustainable Textile Teach-Ins, workshops focusing on repair, upcycling and natural materials.



A recent \$26-million donation by the Thistle Foundation to CCHF, an organization that raises funds for 13 of Canada's children's hospitals, illustrates a trend in partnerships in the philanthropy sector. ISTOCK.COM



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