CONCORDIA VOLUNTARY UNIVERSITY REVIEW

Current and potential contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

January 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report—called a Voluntary University Review (VUR) following United Nations convention—lays out a generative vision for how Concordia can engage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals.

The VUR process was informally initiated in the fall of 2020 with President Graham Carr's announcement of Concordia's intention to join the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. Preceding this announcement, Concordia had published its first comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan, issued a groundbreaking sustainable bond for construction of the Applied Science Hub, and pledged to divest the Concordia University Foundation's assets from the coal, oil, and gas industries, and to achieve 100% sustainable investments by 2025. Articulating Concordia's sustainability efforts with a global sustainable development agenda made sense as an important next step in our institutional trajectory.

The announcements in 2023 of additional high-profile sustainability-related commitments and initiatives—the PLAN/NET ZERØ campus decarbonization initiative as well as the $123 million Volt-Age research initiative—only further underscore the depth of Concordia's commitment to sustainability, in particular with respect to climate action.

Given the substantial body of work related to sustainability that is already being pursued at Concordia, the central question of this elective self-assessment is, **How might the SDGs help Concordia deepen its contributions to efforts to achieve the interconnected economic, social, and environmental goals committed to by UN member nations?**

To answer this question, the SDGs have been used as an analytical lens for categorizing Concordia's current activities and priorities, and as a prompt for creative thinking about ways that we can deepen and expand our **sustainable impact.** Sustainable impact is defined here as the tangible benefits of various kinds that we as a university produce related to socio-ecological transitions that respect planetary limits and provide equity, security, and well-being for human societies.[1]
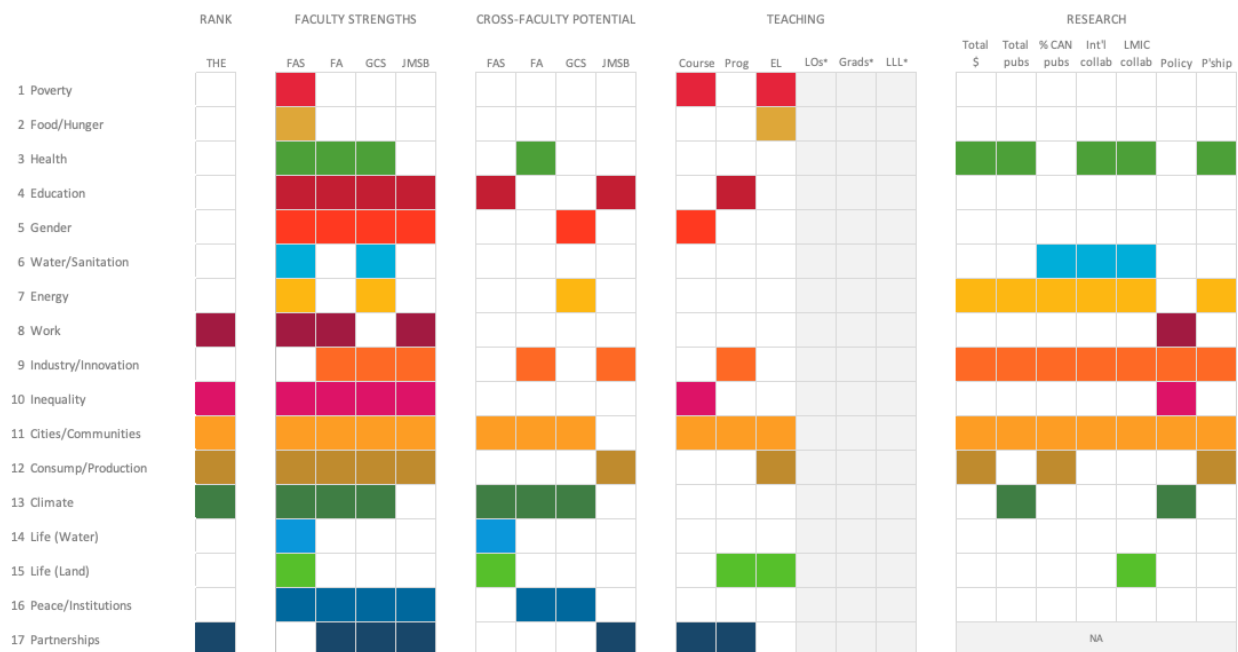
Using the SDGs as a lens helps us to see and strengthen connections between a broad range of undertakings at the university being driven by commitments to sustainability, decolonization and indigenization, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and anti-Black racism. The VUR also helps us identify gaps in our current efforts and uncover news ways to tap our latent or underutilized capacities as an institution for sustainable impact.

The SDGs are a global call to action, and this report aims to help us see how Concordia can be responsive to this call, recognizing the transformative potential of collective action.

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[1] This definition of sustainable impact borrows heavily from the definition of "sustainable innovation" put forward in "Innovation Durable: Livre Blanc Sur L'innovation Durable," which was produced by *Centre Interdisciplinaire De Recherche En Opérationnalisation Du Développement Durable* (CIRODD) in 2021.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE REVIEW PROCESS

The evidence included in this report is organized in a way that helps us to see concentrations of SDG-related activity across domains at the university, including teaching, research, student life, and operations. This presentation validates some known strengths and identifies some additional ones that perhaps were not as evident or identifiable previously. These strengths and concentrations are made evident in a kind of institutional heat map shown in partial form below.

	RANK	FACULTY STRENGTHS				CROSS-FACULTY POTENTIAL				TEACHING						RESEARCH						
	THE	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB	Course	Prog	EL	LOs*	Grads*	LLL*	Total $	Total pubs	% CAN pubs	Int'l collab	LMIC collab	Policy	P'ship
1 Poverty																						
2 Food/Hunger																						
3 Health																						
4 Education																						
5 Gender																						
6 Water/Sanitation																						
7 Energy																						
8 Work																						
9 Industry/Innovation																						
10 Inequality																						
11 Cities/Communities																						
12 Consump/Production																						
13 Climate																						
14 Life (Water)																						
15 Life (Land)																						
16 Peace/Institutions																						
17 Partnerships																NA						

See page 20 for a full heat map.

In addition to identifying areas of concentrated activity, this VUR report also identifies **gaps, opportunities, and areas of strong community interest** related to specific SDGs, including—

- Developing concerted strategies for addressing the impacts of poverty on members of the university community, specifically including food insecurity (SDGs 1 and 2)

- Deepening efforts around access to university education for underrepresented students (SDG 4)

- Organizing ourselves more effectively around work focused on addressing inequalities (SDGs 5 & 10)

- Equipping students, employers, and communities for 'green economy' transitions (SDG 8)

- Intensifying collaborations and education related to ambitious climate action (SDG 13)

- Formulating an institutional strategy related to preserving biodiversity (SDG 15)

In terms of what is needed to **enhance Concordia's overall capacity for sustainable impact,** this report puts forward three transversal recommendations that emerged from the extensive consultations undertaken during the VUR process.

I. **Establish an SDG-aligned impact agenda for Concordia that identifies priority areas for coordinated institutional action based on documented strengths**

This kind of agenda, which integrates operational and academic activities in a way that is unique among universities, defines Concordia's priorities with respect to crucial social, economic, and environmental transitions. It forges connections and coherence across a range of university action plans, initiatives, and research agendas, and it situates partnership as central to pursuing impact.

FIGURE 1 | The core areas of focus in a proposed Sustainable Impact Agenda for Concordia.

II. **Organize the required infrastructure to deliver on the Sustainable Impact Agenda**

This recommendation is focused on how we deploy our resources and capacities in support of sustainable impact. This involves developing—

1. A 'research impact pathways' program that helps to increase the scholarly and societal value of research, including but not limited to sustainability-related research;

2. Seed funding to support development of new impact-focused research teams;

3. New opportunities for cross-unit teaching focused on SDG-related issues and problematics;

4. A broadened 'campus living lab' program to facilitate faculty and student contributions to sustainability-related priorities in campus operations;

5. Impact teams that pull together various researchers, offices, and teams to advance sustainable impact priorities and cultivate strategic partnerships;

6. Tenure, promotion, and research assessment criteria for faculty that recognize and facilitate investment in impact-related activities; and

7. Learning and development offerings related to pursuing sustainable impact.

8. Supports for open science, open scholarship, and open data.

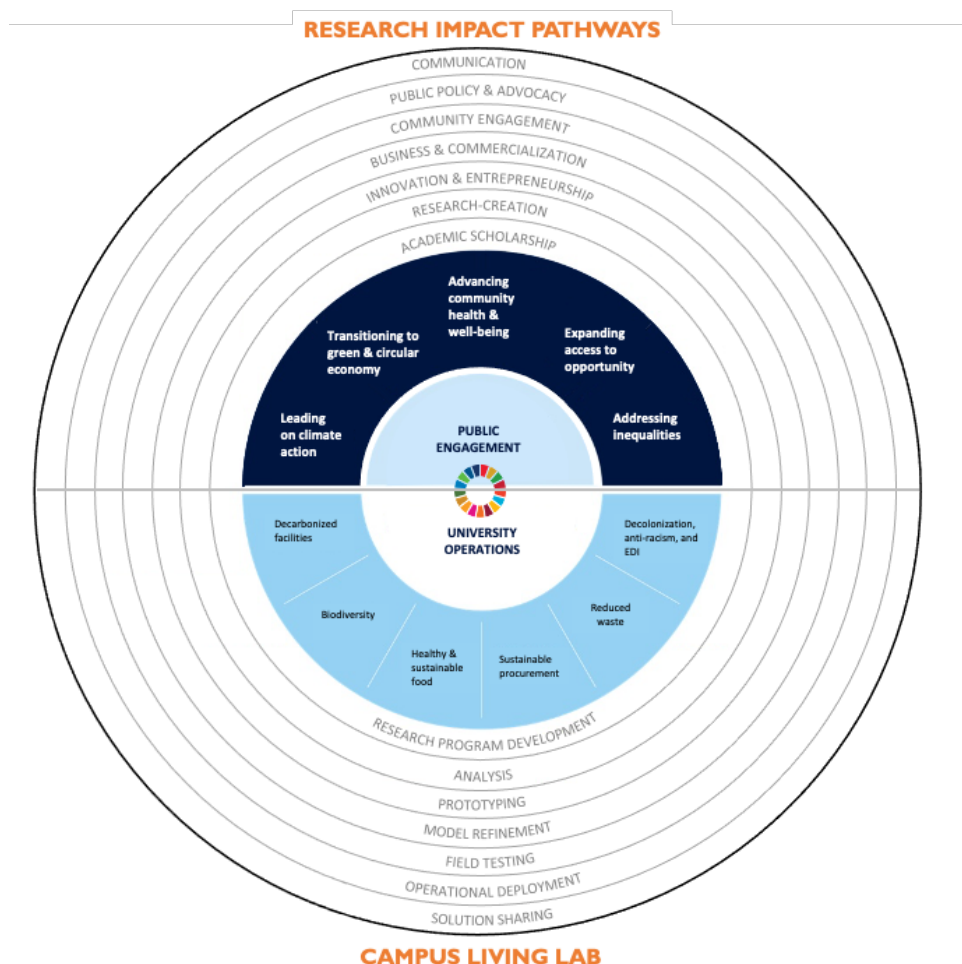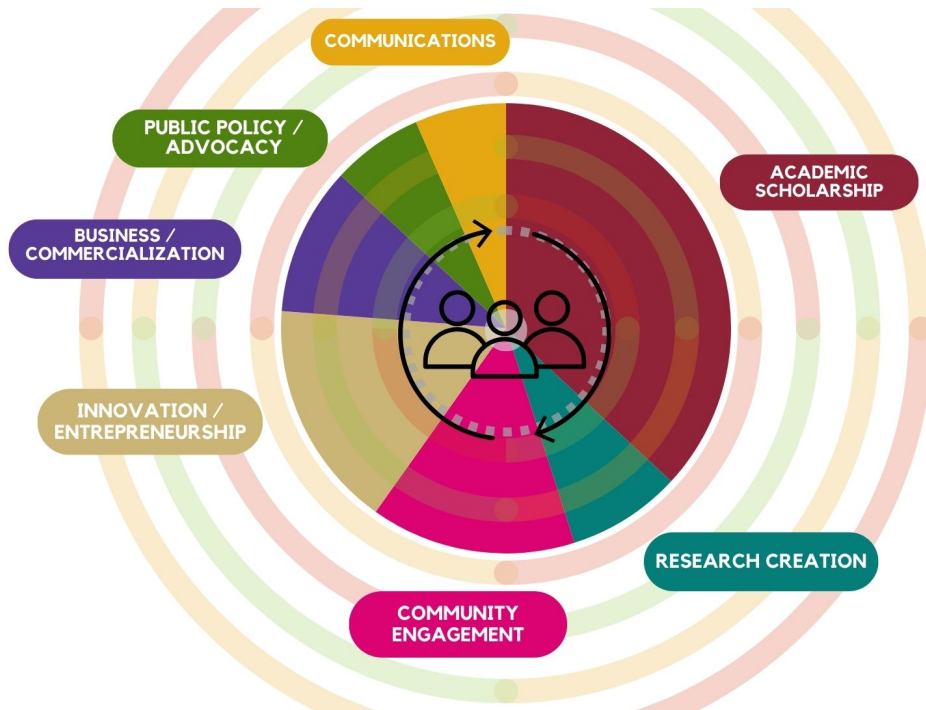**FIGURE 2** | Institutional infrastructure in support of a Sustainable Impact Agenda.

FIGURE 3 | A detail describing various pathways for research impact.

III. **Develop new ways to ensure progress on and accountability for the Sustainable Impact Agenda**

Along with an agenda, we need practices that help us to understand the effectiveness of our efforts and to identify areas needing further attention. These include—

1. Honest, constructive auditing and progress reporting, beginning with an equity audit;
2. Robust indicators that convey our standing on key measures of sustainable impact;
3. Low-maintenance tools and practices that help us efficiently track impact-related activities;
4. Generative feedback loops with key stakeholders, partners, employers, and graduates to assess the effectiveness of our impact-related work; and
5. Board-level engagement related to sustainable impact.

See page 37 for more details about the report's three recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Spurred by the UN's ambitious agenda for global sustainable development, this report lays out concrete steps Concordia can take to engage with and respond to the SDGs, and to better incorporate their core concerns into the fabric of our institution. The SDG-aligned agenda presented here, backed by augmented forms of organizational infrastructure and assessment practices, provides an important foundation for Concordia's next 50 years as values-driven research university, anchor institution, and agent of sustainable impact.

VOLUNTARY UNIVERSITY REVIEW

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Additional evidence, data, and background information is available in a separate set of appendices.

FOREWORD

Graham Carr
President and Vice-Chancellor

Anne Whitelaw
Provost and Vice-President, Academic

University leadership around sustainability is crucial.

This leadership goes beyond celebrating the successes of a few spotlight initiatives.
It's about using our entire toolkit of resources and capacities—our research, creation, teaching, procurement, campus operations and community engagement—to help change behavior and practices in ways that sharply reduce harms to the planet, foster equity and shared prosperity for all.

We can make this work happen through our distinctive role as an educational and research institution anchored in the city of Montreal and open to the world. Yet we cannot and should not go it alone. Our efforts will inevitably have more impact when we partner and collaborate with government, civil society, our local communities, and private industry to repattern the ways that we live, move, and work.

These are challenging times on many fronts, which is all the more reason why I hope that this report provides you with a clear view of the broad range and inspiring magnitude of what is happening at Concordia related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Given the massive obstacles and disruptions we face, I hope the report inspires us all to join others in our university community by leaning even further into the work that the SDGs challenge us to do.

We undertook the Voluntary University Review to see what the SDGs can show us about ourselves and our work as an institution. The aim was not to identify how we can improve in a ranking or do better PR. We wanted to honestly assess our strengths and weaknesses based on the available evidence, and to use this assessment to identify ways we can do more to contribute to global efforts to transition away from unsustainable, inequitable, and unjust practices. We have learned a lot.

The VUR recommendations will provide basis for connecting, coordinating, and amplifying the impact of a range of plans and strategies we're already currently committed to—including ones being led out of the academic sector around teaching and learning, Indigenization and decolonization, community engagement, equity and inclusion, and anti-Black racism. The report identifies key components of 'impact infrastructure' we can put in place make work in all of these areas more than the sum of the parts. We will work to identify the right opportunities to move forward with various recommendations as time, resources, and circumstances allow.

Thank you to community members who participated in VUR activities and contributed to the thinking that's been distilled in this report. I hope it inspires and equips you to help accelerate transitions to a more just, inclusive, and broadly prosperous city and world.

Tim Evans
Vice-President, Research, Innovation and Impact

Michael Di Grappa
Vice-President, Services and Sustainability

The VUR's three overarching recommendations offer a roadmap for Concordia to amplify its societal impact. These recommendations align well with priorities articulated in Concordia's Strategic Research Plan 2023–2028 and have directly informed the development of the Pathways to Impact initiative being led by my office.

The VUR process has catalyzed critical conversations across campus, revealing that achieving impact is not the sole responsibility of researchers but a shared institutional commitment that should engage all units to optimize our overall impact. This includes advancing key institutional priorities, such as diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and decolonization, through a coordinated, university-wide approach.

Concordia's research community is already driving meaningful impact, but the VUR reinforces our ambition to scale this work through a more unified, "whole university" approach. This means mobilizing resources, infrastructure, and expertise across units and sectors to tackle systemic challenges more collaboratively and effectively. I hope the VUR report serves as both an inspiration and a practical framework for researchers. It highlights Concordia's commitment to impact and invites researchers to connect their work with broader, transformative goals.

Sustainability at Concordia has evolved considerably since it was first introduced on campus in the early 2000s. Back then, the university was taking steps to make its buildings greener and more energy efficient, and launching programs to reduce, reuse, and recycle. In parallel, students interested in enacting initiatives to make our campuses more environmentally and socially friendly spaces to study, work and live had approached the administration to conduct an assessment of sustainability practices at the university.

In the more than twenty years that have followed, in continuous collaboration with our motivated community, we have performed formal assessments of our sustainability performance; adopted a Sustainability Policy; created an Office of Sustainability; launched a Sustainability Plan; introduced project financing tied to the performance of buildings, and this, among hundreds of initiatives we have implemented across our operations, within our curriculum and research, and through community engagement.

Now it is time for Concordia to enter yet another phase in its sustainability journey. As we proudly near the completion of our 2020-2025 Sustainability Action Plan and assess the progress we have made, the VUR prompts us to consider a new way of imagining sustainability at Concordia and beyond. With its broadly encompassing themes and goals, it will be a useful compass in the months and years ahead as we once again orient our institution towards impactful and meaningful change.

INTRODUCTION

The surging interest in the SDGs in higher education provides Concordia a useful opportunity to reexamine our current practices and priorities at a sobering historical juncture. The world is confronting a range of interrelated crises related to climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic and social inequality—in short, crises of sustainability and equity—compounded by new waves of geopolitical instability and impending forms of technological disruption.

The SDGs invite us to consider how Concordia can and should reorganize or reorient itself amidst these historical circumstances. This report, which is an elective self-assessment using an SDG lens, helps us to understand where we currently focus our collective attention, and where we might consider shifting our attention in light of our historical and planetary circumstances.

This kind of assessment is connected to efforts over the past decade-and-a-half to invigorate what is variously referred to as the university's "third mission" or "fourth purpose"—its societal contributions above and beyond narrowly defined teaching, research, and academic community service activities. The SDGs provide a previously missing framework for categorizing and evaluating these contributions, and for connecting university activities to what the UN calls a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet."

CONTEXT

I.   INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the ratification of the SDGs at the UN in 2015, a broad range of initiatives and programs have emerged to facilitate contributions from postsecondary institutions to the work of achieving the goals. These include efforts led by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). UNITAR worked alongside SDSN to create the University Global Coalition, a global group of universities committed to working in support of the SDGs through education, research, and service.

But real catalyst for SDG engagement was Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking. First run in 2019, the Impact Ranking is based on a combination of a keyword-based bibliometric analyses of university research along with evidence submitted by participating institutions of SDG-related policies and activities. 450 universities participated in the first ranking, and by 2023, the participation list swelled to over 1,700 universities.

The THE ranking has sparked wave of interest in SDGs at universities, primarily because it provides a relatively comprehensive and globally recognizable basis for demonstrating the relevance and value of university activities, and for recognizing societal contributions not accounted for in conventional rankings or classifications. In a very short amount of time, the Impact Ranking has become the de facto standard for measuring university societal impact.

Outside of the THE Impact Ranking, a handful of individual universities have undertaken self-assessment processes that either complemented or substituted for the ranking. For example, in 2020, Carnegie Mellon University in the US published the first-ever so-called Voluntary University Review, echoing a process used by countries and cities to self-report on their progress toward the Global Goals.

Whether through participation in the THE Impact Ranking or through conducting voluntary self-assessments, many universities around the world now utilize the SDG framework as a basis for communicating about and reporting on the social impact of their activities.

II. CANADIAN AND QUÉBEC CONTEXT

Canada's federal government has strongly endorsed the SDGs. In 2018, Canada published its first [Voluntary National Review](#) and created an SDG Unit within Employment and Social Development Canada. The SDG Unit's mandate involves raising public awareness of the SDGs, engaging with provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners, civil society, businesses and academia on the development of a National Strategy, and administer an SDG Funding Program of close to $60 million over 13 years (from which Concordia received an [award](#) in 2021).

In terms of the engagement of Canada's postsecondary institutions with the SDGs, SDSN Canada, which is based at the University of Waterloo, was launched in May 2018. Its mandate is to "mobilize Canadian universities and colleges to facilitate learning and accelerate problem solving for the UN's Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals." Over twenty Canadian universities and nearly as many university faculties, departments, offices, or institutes are members of SDSN Canada.

In 2019, the presidents of two Canadian universities—Suzanne Fortier from McGill and Feridun Hamdullahpur from University of Waterloo—joined with presidents from thirteen other international universities to launch the University Global Coalition. The mandate of the coalition is to provide a platform for universities to "work[] together and in partnership with the United Nations (through UNITAR), SDSN, and other relevant organizations, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals both locally and globally through our education, research, and service missions." Eight Canadian universities have signed on to the Coalition.

In 2019, ten Canadian universities participated in the inaugural THE Impact Ranking. In 2023, twenty-six participated. In intervening years, both Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada have provided facilitation, resources, and communications support for SDG-related work at their member institutions.

In Québec, Université Laval has been a leading proponent of the SDGs amongst postsecondary institutions. For the last several years, the university's Institut EDS has been working to foster a pan-Quebec research network on the SDGs, with the aim to "promote the achievement of the SDGs in Quebec through research that meets the needs and demands of civil society." A formal proposal for support from the Fonds de recherche du Québec is in development.

On the basis of exchanges with members of the Institut EDS and a range of other civil society actors, the Fonds de Recherche du Québec included the SDGs in its criteria for research grant and scholarship applications, inviting applicants to identify how their scholarly work contributed to advancing the Global Goals. The inclusion spurred the circulation of an [open letter](#) to Rémi Quirion arguing against the new requirement, under the argument that "these imposed criteria will have important consequences even though their basis, legitimacy and validity have not really been established."

III.   CONCORDIA CONTEXT

Concordia's explicit engagement with the SDGs was initiated in the fall of 2020 with the announcement from President Carr. This announcement closely followed the issuance of Canada's first sustainable bond for construction of the Applied Science Hub, pledges to divest the Concordia University Foundation's assets from the coal, oil, and gas industries, and to achieve 100% sustainable investments by 2025, and the release of Concordia's first comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan, which included a roadmap for achieving carbon neutrality. The momentum created by this series of commitments, along with Concordia's decision late in the fall of 2019 to participate in THE Impact Ranking, laid the groundwork for the decision to conduct a Voluntary University Review.

Previous campus sustainability assessments—the most recent of which was published in 2015—had an ambitiously wide focus on all aspects of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic) and "all facets of university activities" (teaching and learning, research, public engagement, operations and services, and university governance and management). The same is true for the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) evaluation that Concordia participates in. For the Sustainability Action Plan, community consultations in 2018-19 resulted in a decision to focus the plan on the topics of food, waste, climate, diversity and accessibility, research, and curriculum, though diversity and accessibility were ultimately not addressed in the plan in deference to efforts being led by the Provost's Office related to develop an equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy, as well as update the university's accessibility policy. As a result, the Sustainability Action Plan narrowed the focus of sustainability work at Concordia to some degree, although elements of social and economic sustainability were still reflected in some of the strategies.

The SDG initiative effectively widens the frame again, though with some key differences from previous sustainability assessments. One difference is the focus on the SDGs rather than "sustainability" per se, which seems to have provided additional points of entry for faculty who may not have identified their work with sustainability efforts but who connected with one or more SDG themes. In addition, because the SDG work was being led jointly by the Offices of the President, Provost, Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies, and Vice-President Services and Sustainability, and because there had been a steady drumbeat of dire news on issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic and social inequality, perceptions about the relevance and importance of the work may have been heightened for members of the Concordia community.

In addition to connections to Concordia's sustainability efforts, the SDG initiative and the VUR also articulate with recent work on social transformation, diversity, and inclusion, Indigenization and decolonization, anti-Black racism. In each of these areas, Concordia has undertaken highly visible and consultative forms of action planning in recent years. Part of the motivation for conducting a VUR in close temporal proximity to work in these areas is that the SDG framework holds promise for forging linkages between these efforts, and for situating them in relation to a widely shared global agenda. A VUR is also valuable for stock-taking as these efforts proceed as it can help to identify gaps or opportunities that the SDG framework exposes by virtue of its breadth.

APPROACH

This VUR attempts to take stock of what Concordia already does in a wide variety of domains that are thematically related to the SDGs, and to convey the takeaways from consultations with our community about what we might yet aspire to do, beyond our current efforts.

In terms of current SDG-related activities, the overview presented here draws on more detailed reports from 2020 and 2022 that aggregated evidence from a wide range of sources, including—

- Concordia's web site
- The Office of Research
- The Office of Sustainability, and its various reports and analyses
- Facilities Management
- The Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis
- Reference and subject librarians
- Deans' offices and associate deans
- Communications advisors
- Community members participating in the 17 Rooms exercise
- Other individual faculty members
- The Times Higher Education Impact Ranking
- The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) evaluation

This report does not attempt to produce an exhaustive accounting of Concordia's current activities, but instead presents a curated summary of the current landscape, setting the stage for a series of recommendations about how Concordia can and should respond to the SDGs. These recommendations are highly influenced by the takeaways of the 17 Rooms exercise.

In terms of scope, questions related to future configurations for sustainability research, which has been a focused area of discussion over the past few years, are not taken up here as they fall under the specific jurisdiction of the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies. Similarly, questions around the appropriate governance structures for sustainability activities at Concordia are also not pursued here as these matters are being considered in other contexts.

PROCESS

Below is a brief recapitulation of the timeline of the VUR process.

Dec 2019	Concordia participates in Times Higher Education Impact Ranking for first time
May 2020	Sarah Mendelson from Carnegie Mellon University presents at the President's Executive Group
Jul-Aug 2020	Decision taken by President Graham Carr and Provost Anne Whitelaw to conduct VUR
Early Oct 2020	President Carr announces SDG engagement and VUR process
Late Oct 2020	Sustainability Action Plan launched
Nov 2020	Concordia joins the University Global Coalition and SDSN Canada
Mar 2021	SDG Steering Committee convened for first time

Sep 2021	VUR game plan validated with SDG Steering Committee
Nov 2021	SDG Special Event featuring Sarah Mendelson and other SDG advocates
Jan-Jun 2022	17 Rooms exercise conducted
Nov 2022	18th room event held, gathering feedback on 17 Rooms takeaways
Dec 2022-Mar 2023	Input and data gathered from a range of stakeholders, report drafting

NOTE ON TIMING OF REPORT'S RELEASE

Regarding the timing of the circulation of the VUR, several factors have slowed it production and circulation. The extended timeline for the report's development is partly attributable to the COVID pandemic, the effects of which meant that VUR activities needed to be pursued less intensively than originally planned. During the spring of 2023, when a draft of the report was ready to be circulated, university-wide consultations were also being undertaken around the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the Strategic Research Plan, absorbing available capacity for engaging with and providing input on matters related to high-level institutional priorities. This bottleneck resulted in a preliminary plan to release the report in the fall 2023, but the necessity of focusing on managing budget shortfalls and the Government of Québec's tuition fee policies made releasing the report then seem inadvisable.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The section below provides an overview of the evidence gathered for this report of Concordia's SDG-related activities. The section is broken into three parts:

I.   **DIRECT ENGAGEMENT** | Explicit involvement with, and invocations of, the SDG framework

II. **KEY FACULTY AND UNIT INITIATIVES** | SDG-aligned efforts being led by Faculties and central units

III. **HEAT MAP** | Concentrated areas of SDG-related activity

- Overview
- Times Higher Education Impact Ranking results
- Faculty alignment
- Emphases in teaching
- Emphases in research
- Emphases in engagement activities
- Emphases in student-led activities
- Emphases in current action plans and organizational structures
- Summary comments and observations

IV. **STARS RESULTS** | Outcomes from Concordia's sustainability evaluation

V.   **CONSULTATION TAKEAWAYS** | Outcomes of consultations with the Concordia community

- 17 Rooms exercise
- Conversations with individual faculty members

I. DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

Below are activities at Concordia that directly reference and engage with the SDG framework. While not exhaustive, this body of evidence suggests that there is currently only modest direct or near-direct engagements with the SDGs by Concordians.

- Four full-time or part-time faculty members use the "Sustainable Development Goals" tag in Explore Concordia, while forty Concordia community members use "sustainable development."

- Vivek Venkatesh, UNESCO co-Chair in Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, has used the SDGs in the framing of his research program and projects, including the Innovative Social Pedagogies project funded by the Government of Canada's SDG Fund.

- The SDGs were used as a reference framework in the Volt-Age CFREF proposal.

- The Office of Research's Sustainable Transitions Team Research Initiative fund asks applicants to use the SDG framework to identify the orientation of their proposals.

- JMSB invited faculty to identify their SDG alignments as part of its most recent strategic planning exercise and has identified five SDGs as orienting the Faculty's social impact goals.

- The Sustainability Ecosystem initiative led out of the John Molson Executive Centre uses the SDGs as its reference framework.

- The UNIVER/CITY 2030 initiative also uses the SDGs as its reference framework.

- The Gina Cody School has organized a Capstone SDG Impact Award to recognize capstone projects that have significant potential to address an SDG-related challenge facing society.

- The Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability has offered a course directly focused on the SDGs.

- The Office of Sustainability has integrated the SDGs into their analyses and communications for several years.

- Concordia International has run student programming, contributed to reports, and organized events related to the SDGs.

- 4th Space created and maintains an SDG wall in its facility in connection with its role in hosting the 17 Rooms exercise.

In terms of research publications, a Scopus search conducted in April 2023 identifies 18 publications by Concordia-affiliated researchers from 2017 to the present using "sustainable development goal*" in the title, abstract, or keywords. There are 13 current or former full-time faculty among the authors of the 18 publications, with the remainder being graduate students. A broadened search for "sustainable development" returns 114 publications. See Appendix 2 for more about these query results.

Similar searches of Spectrum, Concordia's open access research repository, in April 2023 yields 7 and 510 results from searches using "sustainable development goal*" and "sustainable development," respectively. There are 19,297 scholarly creations deposited in Spectrum.

A search of the 2022/23 undergraduate calendar turns up zero course descriptions mentioning the SDGs and eleven course descriptions mentioning "sustainable development." In the 2022 Winter, Summer, and Fall graduate calendars, there were also zero course descriptions referring the SDGs and six course descriptions mentioning "sustainable development."

II. KEY FACULTY AND UNIT INITIATIVES

Widening the scope to activities that thematically and/or philosophically align with the SDGs, below is a sampling of initiatives being led by Concordia's Faculties and central units. Note that School of Health activities have not yet been included in this summary.

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

- **Research centres**: The Faculty houses a number of sustainability-oriented research centres, including the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre, the Climate Scenarios, Impacts and Modelling Lab, the Concordia Climate Change Adaptation Lab, the Social Justice Centre, the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, the Montréal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance, the Centre for Research in Human Development, and the Karl Polanyi Institute of Political Economy.

- **Research chairs**: The Faculty has research chairs in SDG-related fields such as Critical Disability Studies; Behavioural Health Intervention; Land-Based Learning and Indigenous Pedagogies; Biodiversity and Conservation; Urban Ecology and Sustainability; Sustainable, Multifunctional Nanomaterials; New Politics of Immigration; and Feminist Media Studies.

- **Annual sustainability conference:** The Loyola Sustainability Research Centre hosts an annual cross-disciplinary conference each spring. Conference events are open to the entire Concordia community and to the public free of charge.

- **Training program for digital sustainability**: Based at the Sustainability in the Digital Age think tank, this graduate training program—called Leadership in Environmental and Digital innovation for Sustainability—helps participants identify where and how digital tools can be used to accelerate the transition to global sustainability. As part of the program, students participate in internships related to global sustainability projects.

- **Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability**: The College offers a Minor and Elective Group in Sustainability Studies and a Sustainability Studies elective group.

- **Green Chemistry Commitment:** The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry will be signing the Green Chemistry Commitment (GCC) through Beyond Benign. By participating in the GCC, the Department is committed to continuing to integrate Green Chemistry into its teaching and research practices.

FACULTY OF FINE ARTS

- **Sustainability of the Fine Arts (SoFA)**: Under this initiative, Fine Arts is creating a multi-year sustainability action plan for the Faculty, in alignment with its 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. The goal is to support and promote the application of sustainability principles across all of Fine Arts.

- **Curriculab**: This initiative supports faculty and departments with curriculum changes related to decolonization, antiracism, and sustainability.

- **Research chairs**: The Faculty has research chairs in SDG-related fields such as Art and Education for Sustainable and Just Futures; Art and Racial Injustice; Indigenous Arts Practice; Onkwehonwené:ha Methodologie; Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary; Critical Practices in Materials and Materiality; Media and Migration; Ecologies of B/black Performance; Critical Curatorial Studies and Decolonizing Art; and UNESCO co-Chair in Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism.

- **Reduced plastic usage**: Through its Exploring Sustainability Across the Arts initiative, the FoFA Gallery has been exploring sustainable alternatives to vinyl exhibition signage, along with other inquiries related to sustainability in the arts.

- **Material waste reduction**: In its renovation and retooling of the Core Technical Centre, Fine Arts prioritized material reuse and waste reduction.

- **Educational access**: The Faculty has developed microprograms and partnered with Cegeps on graduate pathways to facilitate access to its programs by a broad range of students.

GINA CODY SCHOOL

- **Capstone SDG Impact Awards**: These awards recognize capstone projects that promise to have significant and lasting impact with respect to current and future societal challenges. Projects are evaluated for their relationship to the SDGs, the potential of the project to meet the identified SDG targets, the feasibility of the project, and demonstrated knowledge of the SDGs.

- **Research centres:** Gina Cody School houses a number of sustainability-oriented research centres, including the Concordia Institute for Water, Energy and Sustainable Systems, the Centre for Zero Energy Building Studies, the Collaborative Centres on Energy and its Transition, the Green Surface Engineering for Advanced Manufacturing, and the EDI Lab.

- **Research chairs:** The Faculty has research chairs in SDG-related fields such as Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Communities and Cities (CERC); Geoenvironmental Sustainability; EDI in STEM; Spill Response and Remediation; Clean Energy and Energy Storage; Sustainable Mobility Systems; Climate Resilient Buildings; and Healthy Aging.

- **Tech Stewardship Practice Program**: The Faculty supported students who have an interest in becoming "tech stewards" by completing a series of reflective exercises that are designed to complement students' technical and innovation skills, potentially earning a microcredential.

- **Decarbonization of Aerospace Certificate**: The Faculty has created an online training program for working professionals called the Certificate in Decarbonization of Aerospace through Concordia Continuing Education.

- **EDI Research Grant and EDI Award**: The EDI Research Grants support faculty research projects that build knowledge of EDI to affect positive change for marginalized and/or underrepresented groups. The EDI Award recognizes outstanding achievements by faculty, staff or students.

- **Youth outreach programs**: The Faculty offers a range of summer camps and outreach programs for girls and youth from underserved areas of Montreal.

- **Project-based course**: The Faculty offers a cross-university course called Interdisciplinary Studies for Sustainability and Innovation in which students work in teams on projects that tackle complex sustainability challenges faced by real communities around the world.

JOHN MOLSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

- **Climate Business Institute**: JMSB is developing a new cross-disciplinary institute focused on issues at the intersection of business and climate, with Impact Labs focusing on working with a range of partners on difference-making projects.

- **Research chairs and professorships:** The Faculty has research chairs in SDG-related fields such as Governance and Sustainability; Operations and Sustainable Development; and Responsible Organizations.

- **Micro-certificates in Sustainability**: The John Molson Executive Centre recently launched five new sustainability-focused micro-certificates that are developed and taught by experts in the use of Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) criteria is business.

- **Sustainable investment**: JMSB has been running the Manulife Sustainable Investing Practicum since 2020, providing students with an opportunity to manage a virtual equity fund following ESG principles. The Faculty also runs the Sustainable Investment Professional Certification for working professionals.

- **Responsible management education champions**: JMSB has been named a Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Champion for 2024-25. The PRME Champion program's mission is to contribute to thought and action leadership on responsible management education that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Curriculum development**: In 2021, the Faculty appointed a manager whose work is focused on the integration of sustainability and internationalization into JMSB's curriculum. In a recent update to its undergraduate curriculum, the Faculty integrated ESG-related core competencies into the courses that all JMSB undergraduate students are required to take.

CROSS-FACULTY INITIATIVES

- **Volt-Age**: Volt-Age is the brand name for a $123 million Canada First Research Excellence Fund grant focused on electrification and community decarbonization. The grant, which will be distributed over seven years, brings together Concordia researchers from across all Faculties, as well as colleagues from partner universities across the country and internationally.

- **Next-Generation Cities Institute**: The Institute brings together researchers from a range of disciplines including engineering, economics, natural sciences, the arts, humanities and the social sciences to engage in an inclusive and universal approach to sustainable urban development.

- **Sustainability in the Digital Age**: A Concordia-based think tank focused on employing digital innovation to support healthy people and planet, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDA grew from a research framework, exploring digital disruptions for sustainability, created in collaboration with over 250 experts and supported by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ).

- **Graduate Microprogram in Sustainability**: This new cross-Faculty program, which is hosted by the School of Graduate Studies, prepares students to address critical sustainability challenges in cross-disciplinary, hands-on learning environment.

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

- **Sustainability Action Plan**: The office supports the implementation of the action plan, which provides the university with a long-term vision for sustainability and goals and targets related to food, waste, climate, research, and curriculum.

- **STARS and other sustainability assessments**: The office manages the university's STARS assessment and conducts or contributes other assessments related to building GHG emissions, cycling and commuting, and sustainability in the curriculum.

- **Various programs**: The office coordinates student and employee Sustainability Ambassadors programs, the Concordia University Centre for Creative Reuse, Zero Waste Concordia,

Sustainable Transport Resources, Sustainable Event Certification, and the Sustainability Champion Awards.

OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS DIRECTIONS

- **Indigenous Directions Action Plan**: The office manages the implementation of the action plan, which guides Concordia's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

- **Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program**: The Office of Indigenous Directions designed this special pathway for eligible First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to enter academic programs through an adapted admissions process.

- **Various workshops and resources**: These include Pîkiskwêtân, a learning series focused on decolonization and anti-racist Indigenous awareness training, and the Indigenous Elder and Community Protocols, which help to build and support lasting relationships with local Indigenous peoples and communities. The office also reviews and helps develop university policies, procedures and practices, including an Indigenous Identity Policy, that facilitate reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and decolonization of the institution.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (OCE)

- **Dewemaagannag/My Relations:** A self-guided tool and complimentary workshops for researchers, academics, and students who wish to learn how best to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and communities.

- **Indigenous Internship Program:** The OCE facilitates paid internship opportunities for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students to contribute to the work of Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving organizations in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal.

- **Q-BEKH:** Led by Concordia in partnership with UQAM, the Quebec Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub connects researchers, Black entrepreneurs, and community organizations to strengthen the Black Canadian entrepreneurial ecosystem through collaborative research.

- **Support for community-engaged research:** This includes funding, relationship building and/or project coordination for a variety of engaged research projects led by Concordia faculty members and graduate students in collaboration with community groups.

- **University of the Streets Café**: A series of bilingual public conversations held throughout Montréal that connect Concordia and community expertise around issues of public interest to create opportunities for engagement, critical thinking and lifelong learning.

SHIFT CENTRE FOR SOCIAL TRANSORMATION

- **Funding programs**: SHIFT supports projects and initiatives that advance systemic change related to equity, justice and sustainability, with all funding decisions made by community-based selection committees.

- **Collaborative space**: SHIFT manages an accessible space on Concordia's downtown campus where members of both the Concordia and external communities are welcomed to learn about and work towards social transformation.

- **Internship program**: SHIFT provides paid experiential learning opportunities to students from all four faculties to participate in and contribute to community-based social transformation initiatives across Montréal.

- **Research & advocacy program:** SHIFT pairs community partners with paid graduate students and faculty advisors to undertake collaborative research projects focused on transforming systems of injustice, inequity, and unsustainability in Montréal.

EQUITY OFFICE

- **Equity-related training**: These include events and workshops that address topics relating to race, disability, sex and gender.

- **Student and employee equity censuses**: The censuses collect socio-demographic information in order to meaningfully address underrepresentation and address barriers that may prevent community members from fully participating in university life.

- **Policy development and review**: The office reviews and helps develop university policies, procedures and practices to address barriers to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.
- **Consultation services:** The office offers consultation services addressing a variety of topics including equitable recruitment, welcoming campus spaces and inclusive leadership.

DISTRICT 3

- **Balsam Impact program**: This program social enterprises and social innovation startups focused on education, health, environment, culture, or other social issues.

The graphic below aggregates discrete activities and initiatives, providing a broad overview of work at the university with a thematic connection to the SDGs. See Appendix 3 for information about the methods used to create this heat map.

	RANK	FACULTY STRENGTHS	CROSS-FACULTY POTENTIAL	TEACHING	RESEARCH	THINK TANKS	ENGAGEMENT	STUDENTS	UNIVERSITY ACTION PLANS	ADMINISTRATION
	THE	FAS FA GCS JMSB	FAS FA GCS JMSB	Course Prog EL LOs* Grads* LLL*	Total $ — Total pubs — % CAN pubs — Int'l collab — LMIC collab — Policy — P'ship	MIGS SDA	OCE SHIFT — 4th Space — D3 — Innov Lab — U/C 2030 — Cent-raide	SAF — Stud grps	SAP IDAP EDI ABR	VPA VPRGS VPSS US

1 Poverty
2 Food/Hunger
3 Health
4 Education
5 Gender
6 Water/Sanitation
7 Energy
8 Work
9 Industry/Innovation
10 Inequality
11 Cities/Communities
12 Consump/Production
13 Climate
14 Life (Water)
15 Life (Land)
16 Peace/Institutions
17 Partnerships

THE = Times Higher Educ. Impact Ranking

FAS = Faculty of Arts & Science
FA = Faculty of Fine Arts
GCS = Gina Cody School of Eng. & CS
JMSB = John Molson School of Business

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Course = Courses with SDG keywords in descriptions
Prog = Programs with SDG keywords in descriptions
EL = Experiential learning courses with SDG keywords
LOs = Courses with SDG keywords in learning outcomes
Grads = Number of graduates from programs with SDG LOs
LLL = Continuing or professional education offerings related to SDGs

* Insufficient data for these analyses

Total $ = Cumulative total SDG research funding 2016-2023
Total pubs = Cumulative total SDG publications 2017-2021
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LMIC collab = Percentage of co-authorship with researchers from lower/middle income countries related to SDGs
Policy = Number of citations of SDG-related research in policy documents
P'ships = Highest amount of funding for sustainability research with a partnership dimension

MIGS = Montréal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
SDA = Sustainability in the Digital Age

OCE = Office of Community Engagement
SHIFT = SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation
4th Space
D3 = District 3 (including Balsam)
Innov Lab = Innovation Lab
U/C 2030 = UNIVER/CITY 2030
Centraide

SAF = Sustainability Action Fund, a student-run fee
Stud grps = All student groups at Concordia

SAP = Sustainability Action Plan (Office of Sustainability)
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EDI = Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Action Plan (Equity Office)
ABR = Anti-Black Racism Report

VPA = Vice-President, Academic (Provost)
VPRGS = Vice-President, Research & Grad Studies
VPSS = Vice-President, Services & Sustainability
US = University Secretariat

>> See Appendix X for information about the sources and methods used to create this heat map.

The purpose of this heat map is to identify relative concentrations of activities across the SDG spectrum. Given this purpose, in some segments of the map—for example, those focused on teaching and research—only the most intensive areas of activity are registered. Blank fields in these sections should not be interpreted as indicating an *absence of activity* but rather *relatively lower levels of activity*. In addition, the muted fields in the Engagement segment signal the SDG orientation of current projects these teams are supporting, while the saturated fields signal persistent priorities.

Faculty- and unit-level activities (e.g. Faculty research units and engagement activities, or unit-level action plans) are not registered in this heat map. Further mapping at these levels would help to provide an even fuller picture of Concordia's SDG-aligned activities. For a snapshot of these activities, see the 2020 Concordia University SDGs Preliminary Report.

The pages below provide explication and commentary on the different segments of the heat map.

HEAT MAP | THE IMPACT RANKING RESULTS

In terms of THE Impact ranking results, Concordia evinces clear strengths in the six areas identified in the graphic below. See Appendix 4 for more about Concordia's THE Impact Ranking results.

With respect to areas for improvement, results from the THE ranking suggest the following:

	RANK
	THE
1 Poverty	
2 Food/Hunger	
3 Health	
4 Education	
5 Gender	
6 Water/Sanitation	
7 Energy	
8 Work	■
9 Industry/Innovation	
10 Inequality	■
11 Cities/Communities	■
12 Consump/Production	■
13 Climate	■
14 Life (Water)	
15 Life (Land)	
16 Peace/Institutions	
17 Partnerships	■
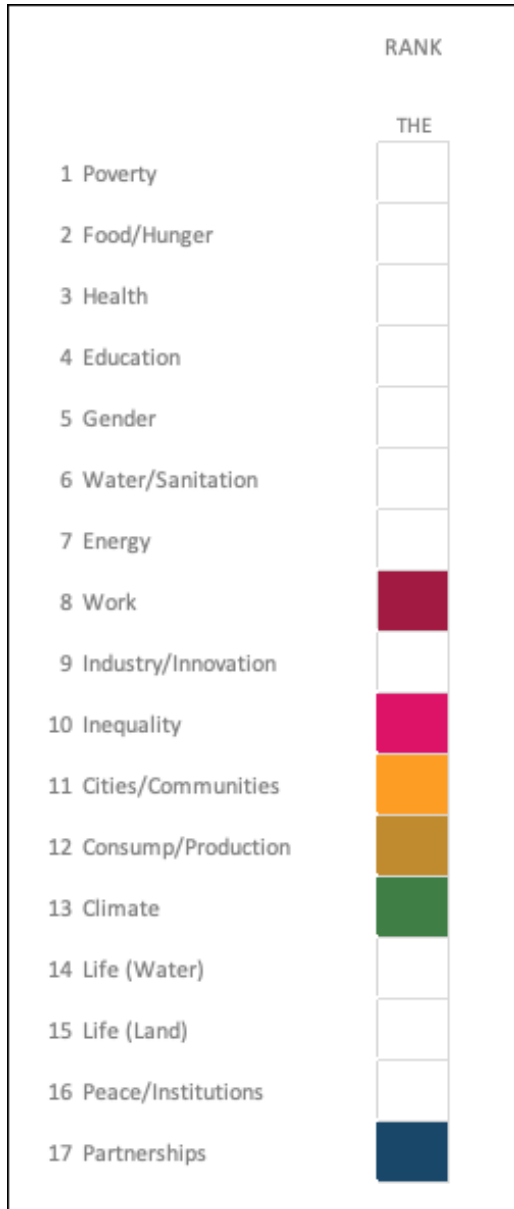
- **Working with government on policy**

  Concordia does not have abundant examples of policy work with governments of all levels, recognizing that language constraints and the absence of efficient tracking mechanisms for such work may be contributing factors.

- **Convening local stakeholders on major issues**

  Concordia does not have structured methods and practices for constructively engaging, at an institutional level, key stakeholders around important issues in our city and province.

- **Collaborating internationally**

  Concordia scores comparatively low on measures of international data-gathering efforts related to the SDGS and co-authorship with researchers from low- and middle-income countries.

- **Offering targeted support to low-income and first-generation students**

  Concordia scores comparatively low on measures of programs that support low-income students and our proportion of first-generation students.

- **Providing students with work placements**

  Concordia scores low on this metric. There could be some anomalies with respect how we and other universities are counting work placements, but taking the outcome here at face value, we seem to provide students with significantly fewer opportunities to gain work experience as part of their academic programs, and thus to do less than others to support students' economic mobility.

- **Requiring sustainability education**

  Concordia loses points because sustainability education is not universally mandatory.
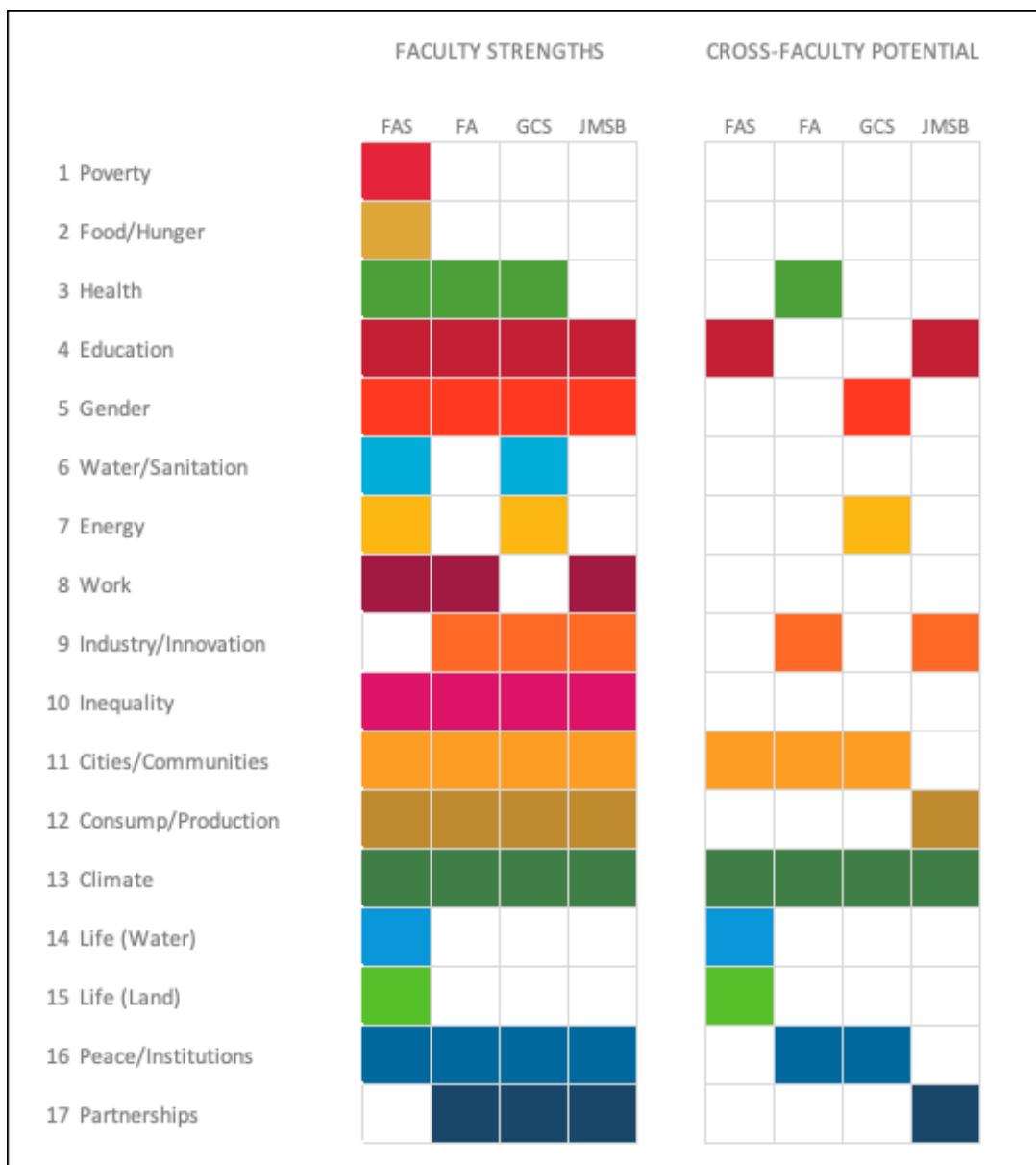
The graphic below summarizes input from deans' offices about where their Faculty's SDG-related strengths lie, and where they see the most potential for cross-Faculty collaboration.

Three observations that can be made based on this input:

- There is near-consensus about both strengths and potential for cross-Faculty collaboration around cities and climate.
- There are five additional SDGs that all four Faculties identify as strengths (4, 5, 10, 12, 16), but these are not indicated as areas with strong potential for cross-Faculty collaboration.
- The absence of consensus about cross-Faculty collaboration around health signals that we have not yet activated the potential that the School of Health is intended to help us realize.

See Appendices 5 and 6 for more detailed responses from Faculties about their SDG alignments.

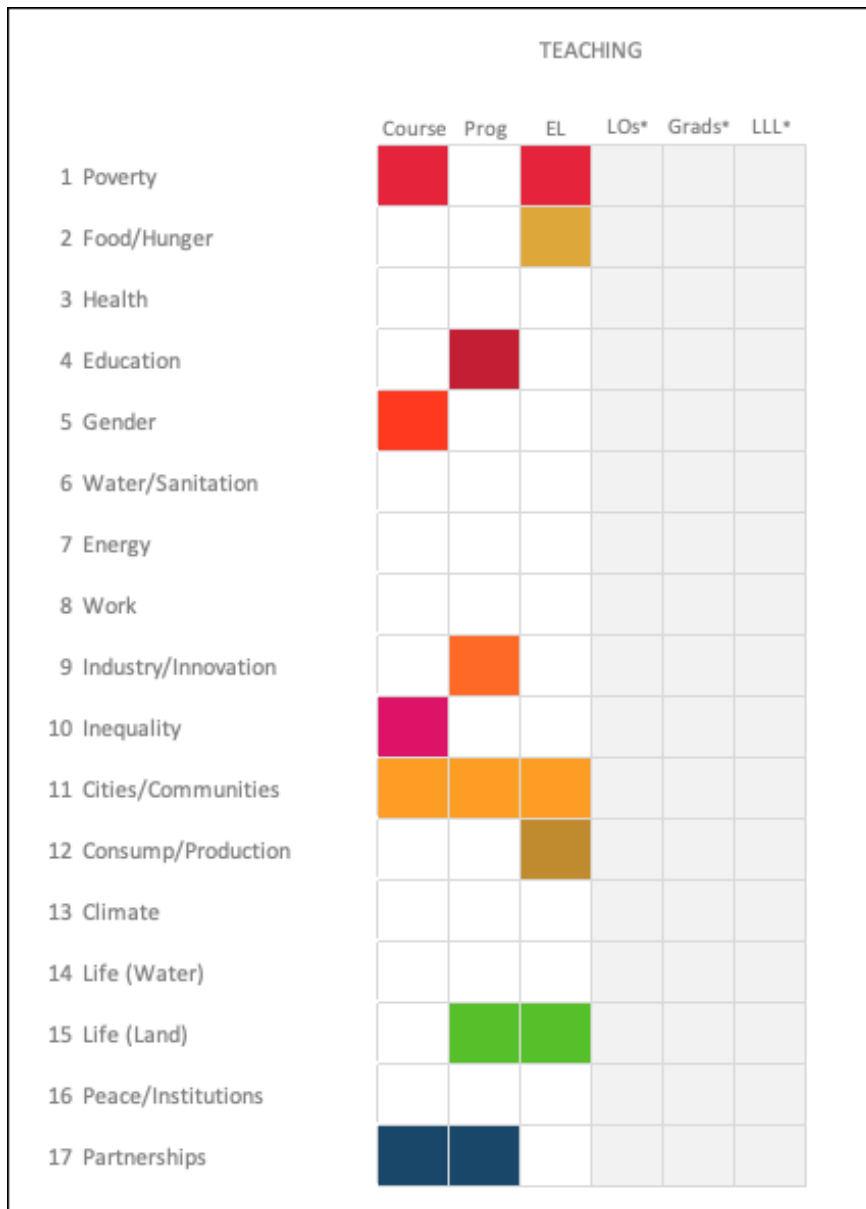|	FACULTY STRENGTHS				CROSS-FACULTY POTENTIAL			
	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB
1 Poverty	■							
2 Food/Hunger	■							
3 Health	■	■	■			■		
4 Education	■	■	■	■	■			■
5 Gender	■	■	■	■			■	
6 Water/Sanitation	■		■					
7 Energy	■		■				■	
8 Work	■	■		■				
9 Industry/Innovation		■	■	■		■		■
10 Inequality	■	■	■	■				
11 Cities/Communities	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
12 Consump/Production	■	■	■	■				■
13 Climate	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
14 Life (Water)	■				■			
15 Life (Land)	■				■			
16 Peace/Institutions	■	■	■	■		■	■	
17 Partnerships		■	■	■				■

HEAT MAP | EMPHASES IN TEACHING

The graphic below conveys the top areas of SDG concentration in Concordia's teaching activities. Results in the Course column are based on keyword analyses of course descriptions, undertaken for the STARS rating. Results in the Prog column are derived from a search of online program listings—both graduate and undergraduate—using basic SDG keywords. The EL column shows experiential learning information, based on cross-referencing courses flagged in the STARS keyword analysis and experiential learning offerings.

Three observations can be made here, recognizing the important limitation that this analysis is not based on direct input from faculty on actual course content and targeted learning outcomes:

- Teaching is one of the few areas where poverty is emphasized.
- There is a clear concentration around cities.
- The absence of climate-related teaching among top SDGs signals a potential need and opportunity.

See Appendix 7 for more information about SDG-related teaching.

TEACHING

	Course	Prog	EL	LOs*	Grads*	LLL*
1 Poverty	■		■			
2 Food/Hunger			■			
3 Health						
4 Education		■				
5 Gender	■					
6 Water/Sanitation						
7 Energy						
8 Work						
9 Industry/Innovation		■				
10 Inequality	■					
11 Cities/Communities	■	■	■			
12 Consump/Production			■			
13 Climate						
14 Life (Water)						
15 Life (Land)		■	■			
16 Peace/Institutions						
17 Partnerships	■	■				

Course = Courses with SDG keywords in descriptions

Prog = Programs with SDG keywords in descriptions

EL = Experiential learning courses with SDG keywords

LOs* = Courses with SDG keywords in learning outcomes

Grads* = Number of graduates from programs with SDG learning outcomes

LLL* = Continuing or professional education offerings related to SDGs

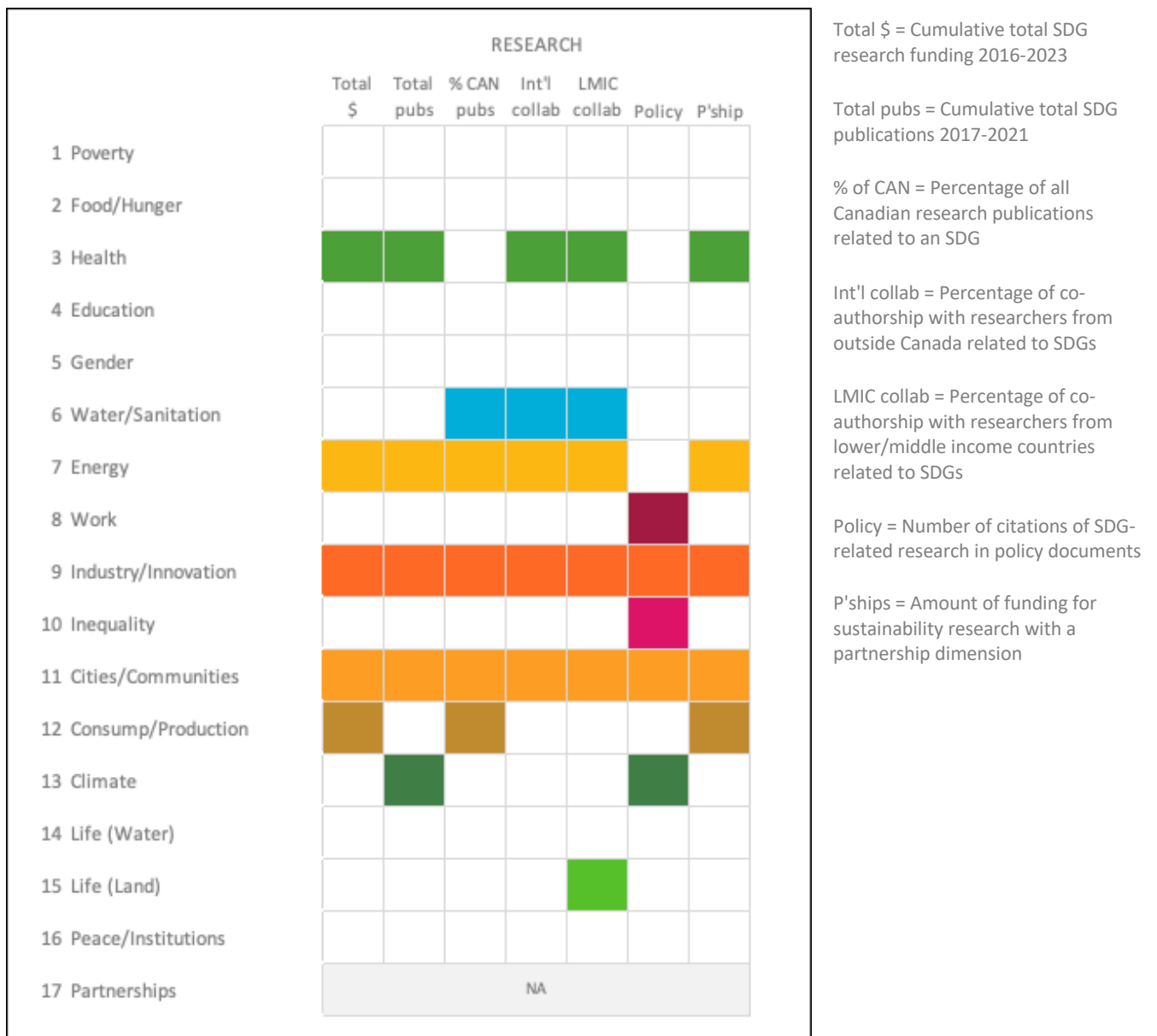* Insufficient data for these analyses

HEAT MAP | EMPHASES IN RESEARCH

With respect to SDG-related research, the graphic below conveys the results of a variety of analyses of Concordia's research outputs and activities. The first and last columns are based on internal analyses. Columns 2-5 are based on bibliometric queries developed by Elsevier. The Policy column indicates areas where Concordia research is cited in policy documents according to Overton. The separate columns to the right identify the orientations of Concordia's two think tanks.

Two observations can be made here, again recognizing the limitations of keyword analyses:

- Health and energy emerge as additional areas of emphasis, beyond industry/innovation and cities.
- Faculty-perceived strengths in education, gender, inequality, and consumption/production are not matched in these indicators of research activity.

See Appendix 8 for more information about SDG-related research.

Total $ = Cumulative total SDG research funding 2016-2023

Total pubs = Cumulative total SDG publications 2017-2021

% of CAN = Percentage of all Canadian research publications related to an SDG

Int'l collab = Percentage of co-authorship with researchers from outside Canada related to SDGs

LMIC collab = Percentage of co-authorship with researchers from lower/middle income countries related to SDGs

Policy = Number of citations of SDG-related research in policy documents

P'ships = Amount of funding for sustainability research with a partnership dimension
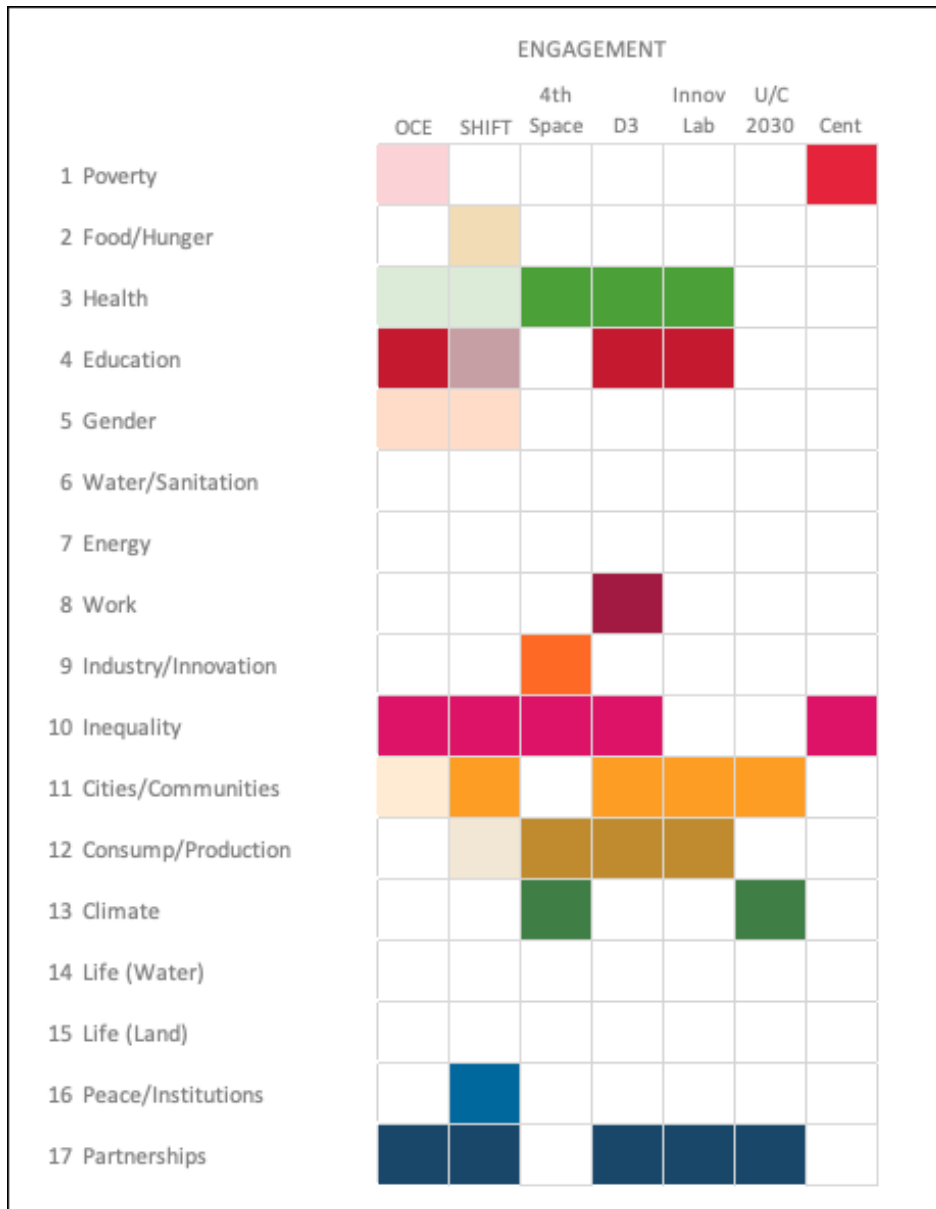
HEAT MAP | EMPHASES IN ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The SDG-related activities of Concordia's institutional-level engagement offices, teams, and initiatives are represented in the graphic below. Integrating the engagement activities of Faculties and other units would provide a more complete picture.

Two observations can be made here:

- Several emphases stand out—health, education, addressing inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, sustainable consumption and production, and partnerships.
- Engagement activities around energy and climate will certainly increase in the years ahead given the Volt-Age initiative and PLAN/NET ZERØ.

ENGAGEMENT

	OCE	SHIFT	4th Space	D3	Innov Lab	U/C 2030	Cent
1 Poverty	▪						▪
2 Food/Hunger		▪					
3 Health	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		
4 Education	▪	▪		▪	▪		
5 Gender	▪	▪					
6 Water/Sanitation							
7 Energy							
8 Work				▪			
9 Industry/Innovation			▪				
10 Inequality	▪	▪	▪	▪			▪
11 Cities/Communities	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	
12 Consump/Production		▪	▪	▪	▪		
13 Climate			▪			▪	
14 Life (Water)							
15 Life (Land)							
16 Peace/Institutions		▪					
17 Partnerships	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	

OCE = Office of Community Engagement

SHIFT = SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation

4th Space

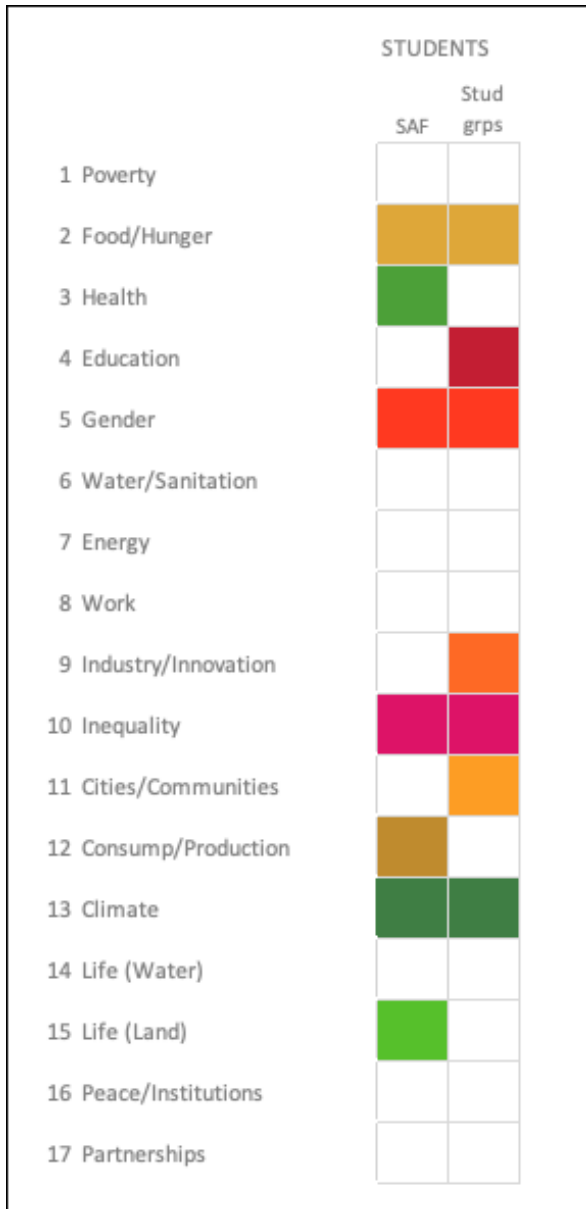D3 = District 3 (including Balsam)

Innov Lab = Innovation Lab

U/C 2030 = UNIVER/CITY 2030

Cent = Centraide

HEAT MAP | EMPHASES IN STUDENT-LED ACTIVITIES

The SDG-related emphases of Concordia's student-led projects and organizations are represented in the graphic below, based on input from the Sustainability Action Fund, the Office of Sustainability, and student group leaders.

The main observation to be made here is that there are a few clear areas of overlapping emphasis related to food/hunger, gender, and climate.

	STUDENTS	
	SAF	Stud grps
1 Poverty		
2 Food/Hunger	�Orange	�Orange
3 Health	�Green	
4 Education		� Red
5 Gender	�Red	�Red
6 Water/Sanitation		
7 Energy		
8 Work		
9 Industry/Innovation		�Orange
10 Inequality	�Pink	�Pink
11 Cities/Communities		�Orange
12 Consump/Production	�Brown	
13 Climate	� Green	� Green
14 Life (Water)		
15 Life (Land)	� Green	
16 Peace/Institutions		
17 Partnerships		

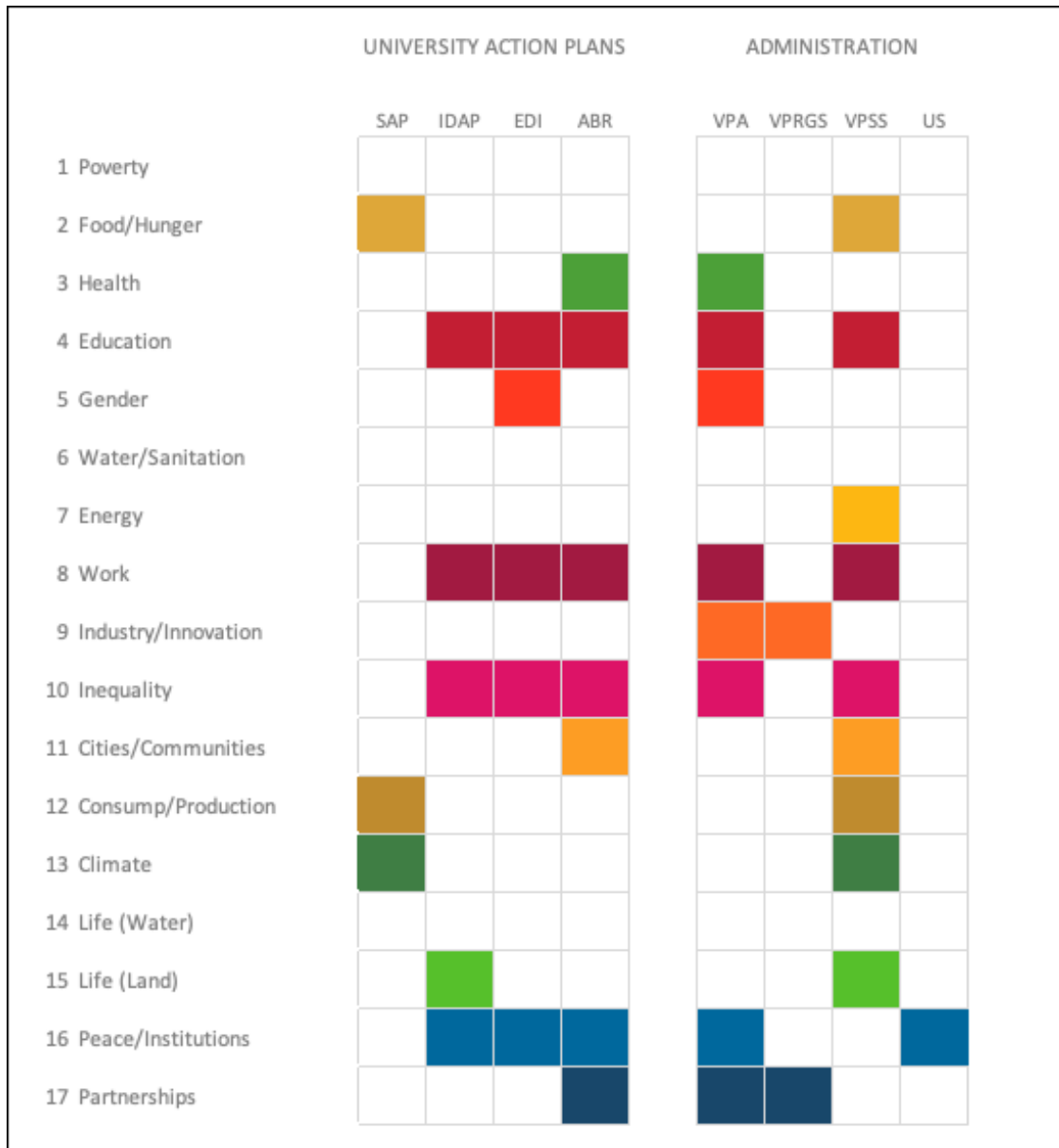SAF = Sustainability Action Fund, a student-run fee levy group

Stud group = All student groups at Concordia

HEAT MAP | EMPHASES IN CURRENT ACTION PLANS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

The graphic below identifies the SDG orientations of recent institutional-level action plans, as well as offices, teams, or staff from various university sectors whose work aligns with various SDGs.

Two observations can be made here:

- Despite the presence of various supports, there is no action plan or team directly focused on addressing the impacts of poverty on students.
- The de-emphasis on pursuing external partnerships in relation to university action plans makes sense in view of the focus of these plans and staff capacities, but there may be potential to explore ways to build cross-organizational collaborations around these efforts.

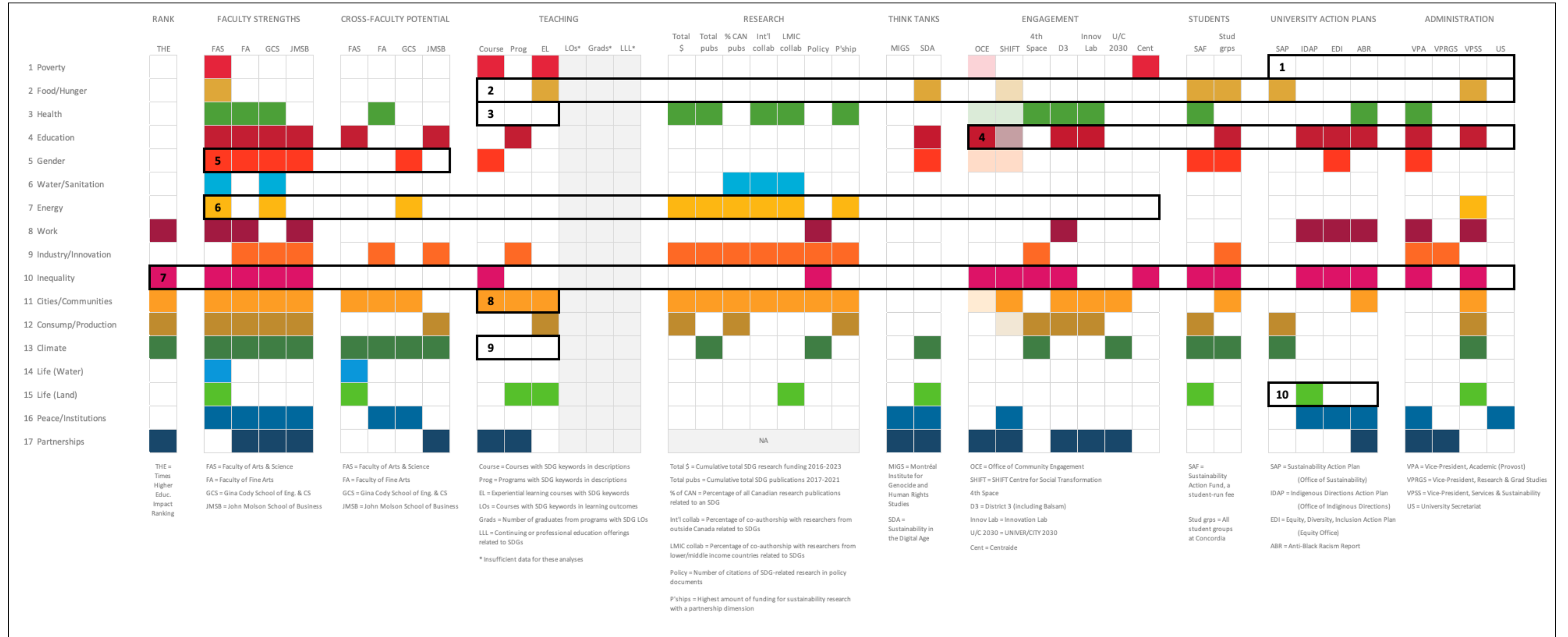|	UNIVERSITY ACTION PLANS				ADMINISTRATION			
	SAP	IDAP	EDI	ABR	VPA	VPRGS	VPSS	US
1 Poverty								
2 Food/Hunger	■						■	
3 Health				■	■			
4 Education		■	■	■	■		■	
5 Gender			■		■			
6 Water/Sanitation								
7 Energy							■	
8 Work		■	■	■	■		■	
9 Industry/Innovation					■	■		
10 Inequality		■	■	■	■		■	
11 Cities/Communities				■			■	
12 Consump/Production	■						■	
13 Climate	■						■	
14 Life (Water)								
15 Life (Land)		■					■	
16 Peace/Institutions	■	■	■		■			■
17 Partnerships				■	■	■		

SAP = Sustainability Action Plan

IDAP = Indigenous Directions Action Plan

EDI = Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Action Plan

ABR = Anti-Black Racism Report

VPA = Vice-President, Academic (Provost)

VPRGS = Vice-President, Research & Grad Studies

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Refocusing on the broad overview, ten additional observations can be made on the basis of this mapping exercise:

	RANK	FACULTY STRENGTHS				CROSS-FACULTY POTENTIAL				TEACHING						RESEARCH							THINK TANKS		ENGAGEMENT								STUDENTS		UNIVERSITY ACTION PLANS				ADMINISTRATION			
	THE	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB	FAS	FA	GCS	JMSB	Course	Prog	EL	LOs*	Grads*	LLL*	Total $	Total pubs	% CAN pubs	Int'l collab	LMIC collab	Policy	P'ship	MIGS	SDA	OCE	SHIFT	4th Space	D3	Innov Lab	U/C 2030	Cent	SAF	Stud grps	SAP	IDAP	EDI	ABR	VPA	VPRGS	VPSS	US
1 Poverty																																									
2 Food/Hunger																																									
3 Health																																									
4 Education																																									
5 Gender																																									
6 Water/Sanitation																																									
7 Energy																																									
8 Work																																									
9 Industry/Innovation																																									
10 Inequality																																									
11 Cities/Communities																																									
12 Consump/Production																																									
13 Climate																																									
14 Life (Water)																																									
15 Life (Land)																																									
16 Peace/Institutions																																									
17 Partnerships													NA																												

THE = Times Higher Educ. Impact Ranking

FAS = Faculty of Arts & Science
FA = Faculty of Fine Arts
GCS = Gina Cody School of Eng. & CS
JMSB = John Molson School of Business

FAS = Faculty of Arts & Science
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JMSB = John Molson School of Business

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4th Space
D3 = District 3 (including Balsam)
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ABR = Anti-Black Racism Report

VPA = Vice-President, Academic (Provost)
VPRGS = Vice-President, Research & Grad Studies
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1. There is a notable absence of university plans, strategies, offices, or teams explicitly focused on addressing the impacts of poverty on students in a coordinated way.

2. The 17 Rooms process revealed a continuing interest in academic activity related to urban farming and food production, which could be connected to university efforts related to addressing students' food insecurity.

3. The School of Health provides an opportunity to develop significant educational offerings around health to match the research concentration in this area.

4. The 17 Rooms process also revealed a deep investment in extending current efforts related to providing educational opportunities to underrepresented student groups.

5. Input from Faculties indicates that there may be an opportunity to translate shared Faculty strengths related to gender into cross-Faculty collaboration.

6. In keeping with Volt-Age, the heat map reinforces the idea that we have an opportunity to leverage and extend our research strengths related to energy and energy transitions.

7. In relation to addressing inequalities, we see here a significant discrepancy between perceived Faculty strength and cross-Faculty collaboration, as well as an opportunity to better connect research with university engagement activities and actions plans.

8. This analysis confirms the prevalence of the sustainable cities and communities theme at Concordia, but there may be opportunities to more explicitly foreground this theme in our educational offerings outside of Urban Studies & Urban Planning.

9. As noted elsewhere, analyses of our course offerings show us that the number of climate-related courses are comparatively low at Concordia.

10. Concordia does not currently have a biodiversity strategy or action plan, though there is clear interest in the Office of Sustainability, and new work is being undertaken in this area by Facilities Management.

IV. STARS RESULTS

Since 2012, Concordia has undertaken rigorous self-assessments of its performance in a variety of sustainability domains under the STARS rating system. The Office of Sustainability oversees Concordia's STARS submissions. Below are Concordia's most recent STARS scores, situated next to those of the Université de Sherbrooke, which achieved the top overall STARS score worldwide in the most recent rating cycle. A detailed analysis of Concordia's STARS results is available here.

See Appendix 9 for additional information about Concordia's STARS results compared to other institutions.

CONCORDIA

Rating	Score	Valid Through	Liaison	Submitted
Gold	72.00	Jan. 27, 2025	Jessica Krejcik	Dec. 22, 2021

Report Preface

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| Institutional Characteristics |

Academics

| Curriculum | 29.29 / 40.00 |
| Research | 18.00 / 18.00 |

Engagement

| Campus Engagement | 16.89 / 21.00 |
| Public Engagement | 16.22 / 20.00 |

Operations

Air & Climate	6.46 / 11.00
Buildings	4.29 / 8.00
Energy	2.90 / 10.00
Food & Dining	3.32 / 8.00
Grounds	2.00 / 3.00
Purchasing	4.88 / 6.00
Transportation	5.79 / 7.00
Waste	4.64 / 10.00
Water	0.50 / 7.00

Planning & Administration

Coordination & Planning	8.25 / 9.00
Diversity & Affordability	4.83 / 10.00
Investment & Finance	4.31 / 6.00
Wellbeing & Work	4.12 / 7.00

Innovation & Leadership

| Innovation & Leadership | 4.00 |

SHERBROOKE

Rating	Score	Valid Through	Liaison	Submitted
Platinum	92.73	Jan. 16, 2026	Emmanuelle Jodoin	Oct. 24, 2022

Report Preface

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Academics

| Curriculum | 38.87 / 40.00 |
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Engagement

| Campus Engagement | 21.00 / 21.00 |
| Public Engagement | 19.31 / 20.00 |

Operations

Air & Climate	10.48 / 11.00
Buildings	2.95 / 8.00
Energy	5.07 / 10.00
Food & Dining	4.19 / 8.00
Grounds	3.86 / 4.00
Purchasing	5.26 / 6.00
Transportation	5.15 / 7.00
Waste	8.49 / 10.00
Water	6.00 / 6.00

Planning & Administration

Coordination & Planning	9.00 / 9.00
Diversity & Affordability	9.40 / 10.00
Investment & Finance	5.00 / 6.00
Wellbeing & Work	6.32 / 7.00

Innovation & Leadership

| Innovation & Leadership | 4.00 |

V. CONSULTATION TAKEAWAYS | 17 ROOMS EXERCISE

The 17 Rooms exercise engaged close to 100 faculty, staff, and students in structured conversations around each of the 17 SDGs between January and June 2022. Participants were invited to consider the benefits and offer critiques of the SDG framework, review and contribute to compendia of Concordia activities related to each SDG, assess the relevance of UN targets and indicators for universities, and identify ideas and aspirations for Concordia in relation to the Global Goals.

More information about the takeaways from the 17 Rooms process, including detailed information about ideas and aspirations related to individual SDGs, is available in this report.

See Appendix 10 for information about the distribution of SDG interests among 17 Rooms participants.

A high-level summary of participants' perspectives on the SDGs is as follows:

BENEFITS

- There was a broadly shared sense that the SDGs provide a valuable framework and a "common language" that can be used to cultivate cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaborations around shared goals.
- Some participants stated that the SDGs can provide leverage to grassroots efforts through their articulation of targets that can be used as a basis for advocating for policy change and resource allocations.
- Other participants noted that the SDGs compel us to take a global and international view of issues, and to think at scale about how to effectively intervene to address systemic issues.

CRITIQUES

- Because Indigenous peoples were not meaningfully engaged in the development of the SDGs, their perspectives and priorities are not adequately reflected in the goals.
- The SDGs are so high-level that they can seem disconnected from concerns and aspirations of local communities, and aggregated data used for indicators can hide important nuances about sub-populations.
- The SDGs can also mask systemic issues, contradictions between goals, and historical and political explanations (e.g. colonialism) that help to explain the roots of the problems they aim to address.
- In terms of university engagement with the SDGs, participants noted that it can be difficult for universities to adapt and localize the SDGs, and it can be easy to be flippant about institutional as well as individual contributions to the SDGs.

PRIMARY TRANSVERSAL TAKEAWAYS

With respect to the kinds of support structures are needed for SDG-aligned activities in general, below are eight cross-cutting suggestions that were repeated across multiple of the 17 Rooms.

See the graphic in Appendix 5 for information about Faculty responses to these suggested actions.

OTHER CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS AND IDEAS

- Integrate SDGs into all research activities and assessments, including applications and proposals, to bring attention to potential contributions (similar to EDI).

- Consider endorsing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

- Provide activity guides and small grants that allow departments, research units, and service units to organize events and activities that explore their potential contributions to the SDGs.

- Consider ways to provide access to underutilized campus spaces for groups and communities doing SDG-related work.

- Institute an equitable fly less policy for faculty, taking into account differential travel needs of faculty at different junctures in their careers.

- Deepen and extend Concordia's implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an expression of our values around equity and inclusion.

- Create support structures to sustain student-led SDG-related initiatives after students graduate.

- Create mechanisms for better connecting and aligning teams and offices doing work that aligns with the SDGs, including the Office of Community Engagement, the SHIFT Centre, Concordia International, the Knowledge Brokers, the 4th Space team, District 3, etc.

- Use SDGs as basis for communications and public engagement campaign.

Notably, some of these actions and ideas are already being pursued by various offices and teams at Concordia, including endorsing DORA, reviewing uses of campus space, developing a fly less policy, and widening the implementation of UDL.

SDG-SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND IDEAS

See Appendix 11 for a comprehensive list of actions and ideas gleaned from 17 Rooms conversations.

CONSULTATION TAKEAWAYS | CONVERSATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBERS

Below are summaries drawn up on the basis of one-on-one conversations with a handful of Concordia faculty members about the SDGs.

See Appendix 12 for fuller summaries of these conversations.

Bart Simon	Director of Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology)
Govind Gopakumar	Chair, Centre For Engineering In Society
Rachel Berger	Associate Dean, Academic Programs & Development
Mark Sussman	Director, Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society & Culture
Nicole De Silva	Assistant Professor, Political Science
Sarah Turner & Jim Grant	Co-directors, Loyola Sustainability Research Centre

RE THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE SDGS

BART SIMON: During COVID times, we definitely saw a rise in interest around various aspects of sustainability, maker culture, circular economy. The SDGs seem relevant as a way to direct those energies. They can help us to find common objectives to organize around.

GOVIND GOPAKUMAR: The Centre for Engineering in Society (CES) sees SDGs as a great opportunity. The SDGs require us to pay attention to context and community, and—perhaps especially important for engineers and computer scientists—to reach beyond industrial partnerships and collaborations, and to frame our research in terms of its social implications.

RACHEL BERGER: In short, the SDGs are a framework that spells out the social good, a framework for thinking about our engagement, and it can be used in lots of ways to figure out how to be more thoughtful and considerate about our academic programming. The SDGs can advance some bold claims that the School of Graduate Studies wants to make about the future we envision for grad studies, where it is relevant and meaningful and grounded in an ethical approach to what a university should be in the 21st century.

MARK SUSSMAN: The SDGs can further spur the kinds of cross-disciplinary work in the humanities that CISSC is set up to support. The SDGs also provide a rubric that brings new attention to, or provides a fresh rationale for, initiatives that might otherwise fall under the radar or not gain traction. And the SDGs can spur us to pay more attention to a range of issues that literally come to our doorstep on the downtown campus, e.g. people who are unhoused or struggling with mental health issues.

NICOLE DE SILVA: The SDGs can be used as a framework that identifies the desirable impacts Concordia would like to have. But a key consideration is that Concordia is a university, rather than a political/governance actor (though it has its own internal university governance). So the SDGs require adaptation for a university context, where faculty, staff, students, etc. would be the agents producing impacts.

JIM GRANT: I think the SDG framework is really important for fostering interdisciplinary teaching and collaboration across departments and faculties. Each SDG is a daunting task to teach about or

solve for an individual person or course, but opens the door for considering alternate perspectives and reaching out to colleagues for opinions, guest lectures etc. I think the SDGs might also be important to help us situate our local collaborations such as living labs etc. I think students and faculty like/need to see the small and big picture of issues that they are addressing.

SARAH TURNER: The international scope and legitimacy of the SDG framework is particularly useful. It can help forge connections across national and disciplinary contexts, bringing together under one umbrella topics that have traditionally been siloed (social, economic, natural environment). The framework can provide a sense of connection among people working in these different areas. In practical terms, the SDGs can introduce faculty to new networks, conferences, and research funding opportunities. They might also open doors for students in terms of internships, experiences, and conferences.

RE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SDG FRAMEWORK, AND HOW IT *SHOULDN'T* BE USED

BART SIMON: The danger is that it becomes a necessary framework. We need the spirit not the letter of the SDGs. The SDGs don't cover everything that matters. In the name of creating a united front, it can erase other important issues. Also, the SDGs are solutionist in orientation, so artistic investigation is not really in bounds. Arts-oriented approaches help to define problems better, so they shouldn't be eclipsed by solutions-oriented efforts.

GOVIND GOPAKUMAR: The SDGs can provide the thematic infrastructure for a more radical kind of interdisciplinarity, but they shouldn't be used to prescribe directions or over-define issues. Also, we have to avoid SDGs simply becoming check boxes. The SDGs can lend themselves to being pro forma approaches rather than being transformative.

RACHEL BERGER: The SDGs are so broad, so one worry is that they can become meaningless buzzwords. We always need to be thinking about the specifics of what an SDG means for us.

MARK SUSSMAN: The SDGs shouldn't remain a vague abstraction. People need to see what difference they make on the ground.

NICOLE DE SILVA: The SDGs shouldn't be about just celebrating Concordia's existing strengths and how they already fit into the SDGs. If that's the approach, the SDG framework doesn't add anything. I think we have to be intentional about whether and how we adopt this framework. It should disrupt existing practices somehow and mobilize Concordians around new agendas. If it's just about repackaging existing initiatives, there is little value added, and it may even contribute to "fatigue" with the overabundance of frameworks/targets in the university.

JIM GRANT: I think the big limitation of the SDGs is its history of ignoring Indigenous peoples. I finally understood this point clearly after hearing Danika Littlechild's keynote address at our Sustainability Conference in 2022. Some reconciliation is needed here.

SARAH TURNER: The oxymoronic concept of "sustainable development" makes me uncomfortable. Ever-expanding economic growth undermines the premise of ecological preservation, so it's important not to adopt the SDG framework uncritically. There's also the limitation of big international agreements like the SDGs—there's agreement about high-level goals but not on practical next steps to accomplish these goals, or good ways to measure progress. Meaningful accountability is a big challenge. That's true internationally, but also institutionally.

RE GENERAL OR LONGSTANDING ISSUES THAT THE SDG INITIATIVE CAN HELP US ADDRESS

BART SIMON: `Impact assessment` and `interdisciplinarity` in problem development and problem solving.

With respect to impact: our understanding of impact needs to recognize the contributions of problem articulators as much as solutionists. The central question regarding impact should be, does the work generate engagement? Is it generative in some way?

GOVIND GOPAKUMAR: `Facilitating radical interdisciplinarity`

The SDGs can help us focus on supporting ambitious and radical, rather than superficial or proximate, interdisciplinary work. There need to be institutional incentives to help move this work forward.

RACHEL BERGER: `Collaborative, cross-unit curricula`

The 17 Rooms process really illustrated Concordia's capacities in so many domains, but outside the department framework. Seeing how scholars gather around SDG thematics helps us think about ways to make new connections and think collaboratively. It can break down existing territorialities. What's frustrating is to see the ideas that the SDG inspire, but then have roadblocks prevent them from being able to enact these ideas—say, for teaching around an SDG subject. Teaching across departments and Faculties is stymied by collective agreements, budget structures, etc. The impulse the SDGs tap into is toward collaboration and interdisciplinarity, but the university's structures don't support this.

JIM GRANT: `Collaborative, cross-unit curricula`

We have to be able to collaborate more easily across faculties and departments in developing and delivering curriculum, and getting credit for interdisciplinary teaching and supervision. Perhaps the SDG framework will help us remove some of these roadblocks?

RECAP OF CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The SDG heat map, consultation summaries, and general observations above provide a high-level overview of tendencies in and concentrations of SDG-related activities at Concordia, as well as ideas for what Concordia might do to more meaningfully contribute to the kinds of societal outcomes targeted by the SDGs.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT ANALYSIS

The list below identifies important caveats and footnotes on the data and information presented here.

- The heat map registers aggregate patterns, but it elides finer-grained details about the discrete SDG-related activities of Faculties, individual faculty members, students, staff, offices, and teams.

- The analysis of teaching provided here did not involve directly engaging faculty about the content and learning outcomes of their courses.

- Relatedly, the keyword analysis of courses may be unreliable because 1) there is no standardized sustainability or SDG-oriented keywording system for course descriptions, with the result being that alignments may be missed through keyword analyses, and 2) there are likely significant slippages between course descriptions in the calendars, actual course content, and student learning outcomes. The Office of Sustainability is working on a revised course analysis for the next STARS curriculum assessment.

- The analysis of research also did not involve directly engaging faculty about their views of and orientations to the SDGs.

- The analysis of student activities is incomplete as results of a survey of student groups is still pending.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INQUIRY

The list below identifies additional analyses we might pursue to gain a better understanding of our contributions as an education institution to sustainable impact.

- An equity audit, which is a comprehensive study of the fairness of an institution's policies, programs, and practices. A first area of focus could be faculty workload assignment practices, in particular as these practices implicate involvement in activities related to pursuing aspects of the Sustainable Impact Agenda outlined in this report.

- An analysis of student financial and food insecurity, building on a survey conducted in the spring of 2023 by a team being led out of the Office of the Vice-President, Services and Sustainability.

- An analysis of the social and economic mobility of Concordia's graduates, building on things like the Social Mobility Index in the US.

- An analysis of the impact of student housing on Montréal's rental housing market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted at the outset of this report, the central question here is, How might the SDGs help Concordia be a more effective contributor to efforts to achieve the interconnected economic, social, and environmental goals committed to by UN member nations? To address this question, this report makes three multifaceted recommendations.

I.   CREATE A SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA FOR CONCORDIA

II.   ORGANIZE THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO PURSUE THIS AGENDA

III. DEVELOP NEW WAYS TO ENSURE PROGRESS ON AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE AGENDA

Before elaborating on these three recommendations, below are a few overarching considerations about Concordia's utilization of the SDG framework.

As noted in the Introduction, the stance being recommended in this report involves Concordia using the SDGs as a general analytical lens rather than as an explicit guide for university action. Employed in this way, the SDGs can provide the categories to be used when conducting institutional assessments like the ones in this report, in addition to things like academic program appraisals, research unit reviews, or service unit reviews. IN this use case, the SDGs provide conceptual linkages between university activities and broadly shared societal goals.

In addition to being used as an analytical lens, the SDGs can also provide a basis for cultivating or expanding partnerships and collaborations across Faculties and academic disciplines, and with external organizations and stakeholder groups. For example, the SDGs can be used in calls for proposals for partnership-oriented academic work (as is the case with the Sustainable Transitions Team Research Initiative grants launched in 2022). Here, the SDGs act as a kind of partnership framework, providing the high-level goals that can facilitate elective engagement and coordinated action.

A third use case involves using the SDG targets and indicators to help shape the institutional performance indicators that provide university leaders and governors with measures of the organization's performance against relevant benchmarks. This use of the SDGs places emphasis on the institution's contributions to valued outcomes, rather than focusing primarily on inputs, activities, and outputs, as is the case in assessment tools like the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification or the Ashoka Changemaker Campus designation. The Progress and Accountability section below illustrates how the SDGs might be used in this way.

All told, the SDGs provide a useful alternative to other kinds of impact frameworks (e.g. economic impact analyses) or metrics (e.g. publication impact factors) that do not prioritize or recognize the importance of the academy's varied contributions to sustainable impact. The framework can thus have a significant amount of utility for Concordia, even if the university does not directly and explicitly adopt UN-derived targets and indicators.

I. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA FOR CONCORDIA

An SDG-aligned impact agenda identifies priority areas for coordinated institutional action based on documented and high-potential strengths.

Such an agenda identifies where we want to focus our resources and capacities in order to contribute as effectively as possible to vitally important social, economic, and environmental transitions. The need for this kind of agenda was repeatedly expressed during the 17 Rooms process.

With respect to what an *impact agenda* is, this report draws on a 2021 article in the journal *Research Policy*, where research impact is defined as—

> "…demonstrable and/or perceptible benefits to individuals, groups, organizations and society (including human and non-human entities in the present and future) that are causally linked (necessarily or sufficiently) to research."[2]

Broadening out from this definition, an institutional impact agenda is understood here as an intentional program and collection of activities—including but not limited to research—that aim to maximize the creation of "perceptible benefits" by the university community.

An *SDG-aligned* impact agenda is one where the Global Goals provide the domains or categories where we hope to see these benefits realized—for example, in relation to poverty or gender equality or climate change. The SDGs can also be suggestive of potential targets and indicators, but, in keeping with the qualified adoption of the SDG framework suggested above, UN targets and indicators need to be critiqued (given the limitations of the SDGs mentioned in the Introduction) and adapted (given the provenance of the SDGs as guides for national governments) before being adopted by the university. Given this somewhat nuanced relationship to the SDGs, the suggestion here is that we identify Concordia's agenda as a "Sustainable Impact Agenda" to signal a qualified alignment with the UN framework.

An agenda focused on SDG-aligned impact is distinct from an agenda focused on the generic, if nonetheless important, benefits that accrue to society because of what universities do in general— educate and graduate students, produce research, scholarship, and creative works, provide employment, etc. An SDG-oriented impact agenda places emphasis on perceptible benefits stemming from a broad range of university activities that helps our societies transition to forms of human activity that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.[3]

In terms of models for this agenda, what is envisioned here for Concordia is rare if not unique among higher education institutions. There are countless examples of institutional strategies aimed at making university operations more sustainable and/or integrating sustainability into research and teaching, and there are also numerous examples of outward-facing public and community engagement or research impact strategies aimed at identifying prioritized societal contributions, but there are few if any that include all of these things in a single integrated agenda.

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[2] M.S. Reed et al., "Evaluating Impact from Research: A Methodological Framework," *Research Policy* 50, no. 4 (2021): 104147, figure Xhttps://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104147.

[3] Brundtland, G.H. (1987) Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Geneva, UN-Dokument A/42/427.

FIGURE 4 | The core areas of focus in a proposed Sustainable Impact Agenda for Concordia

The top half of the graphic identifies priority areas of focus related to Concordia's public engagement activities. The priorities align with the six SDGs for which Concordia received the highest scores in THE Impact Ranking (as seen on page 21), as well as with what Faculties identified as areas of strength and potential collaboration (as seen on page 22). See Appendix 13 for more information about these areas of focus.

The bottom half of the graphic identifies priority areas of focus related to how Concordia manages the operations of the university. The priorities drawn from the Sustainability Action Plan as well other university action plans, major initiatives, and emerging efforts.

Note: This graphic is based on a figure included in the [2018 sustainability report](#) by the shipping company Maersk.

FIGURE 5 | A mapping of some of Concordia's major institutional initiatives and commitments in relation to the Sustainable Impact Agenda
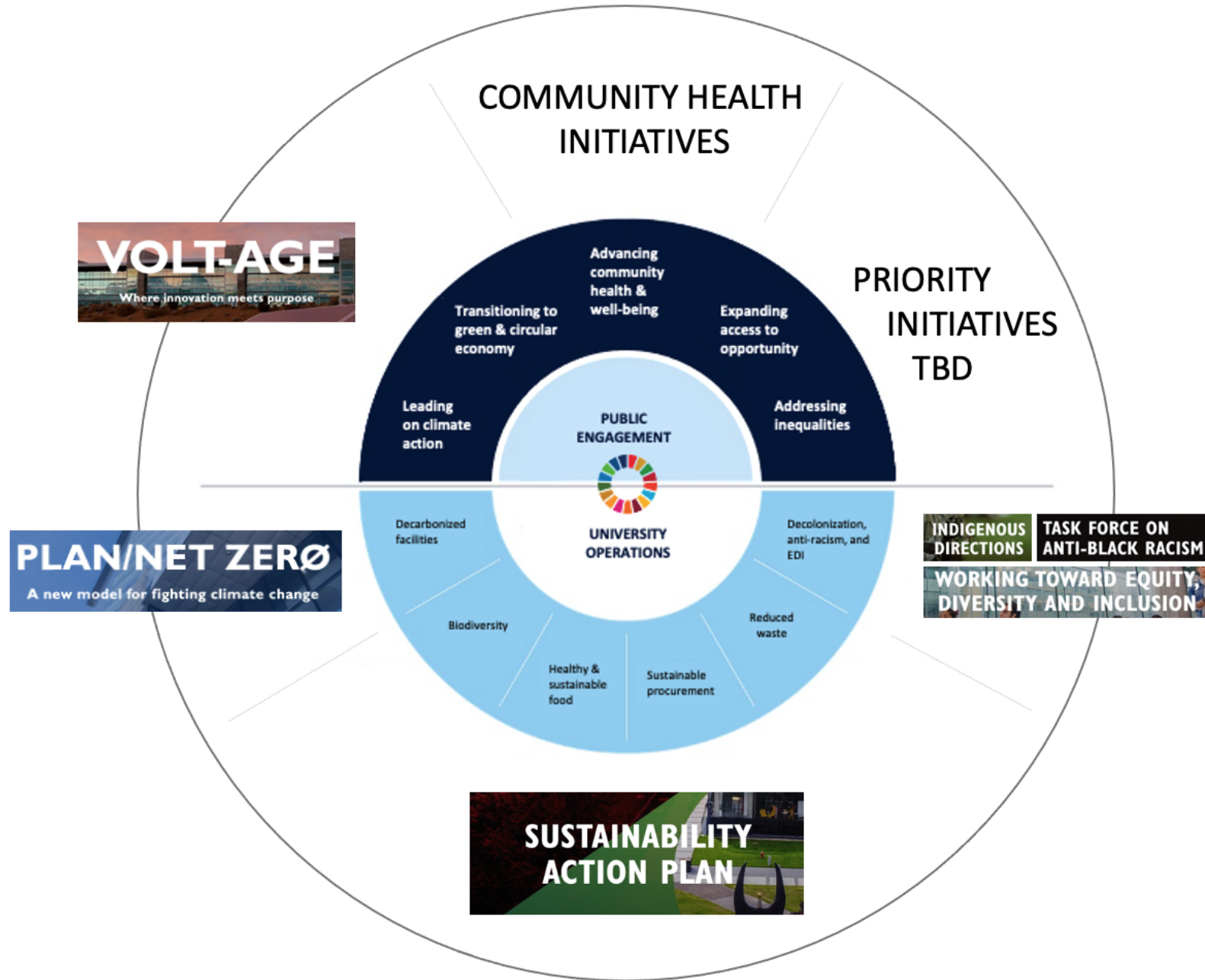
FIGURE 6 | A mock-up of potential targeted outcomes and relevant societal or governmental plans and strategies orienting the Sustainable Impact Agenda
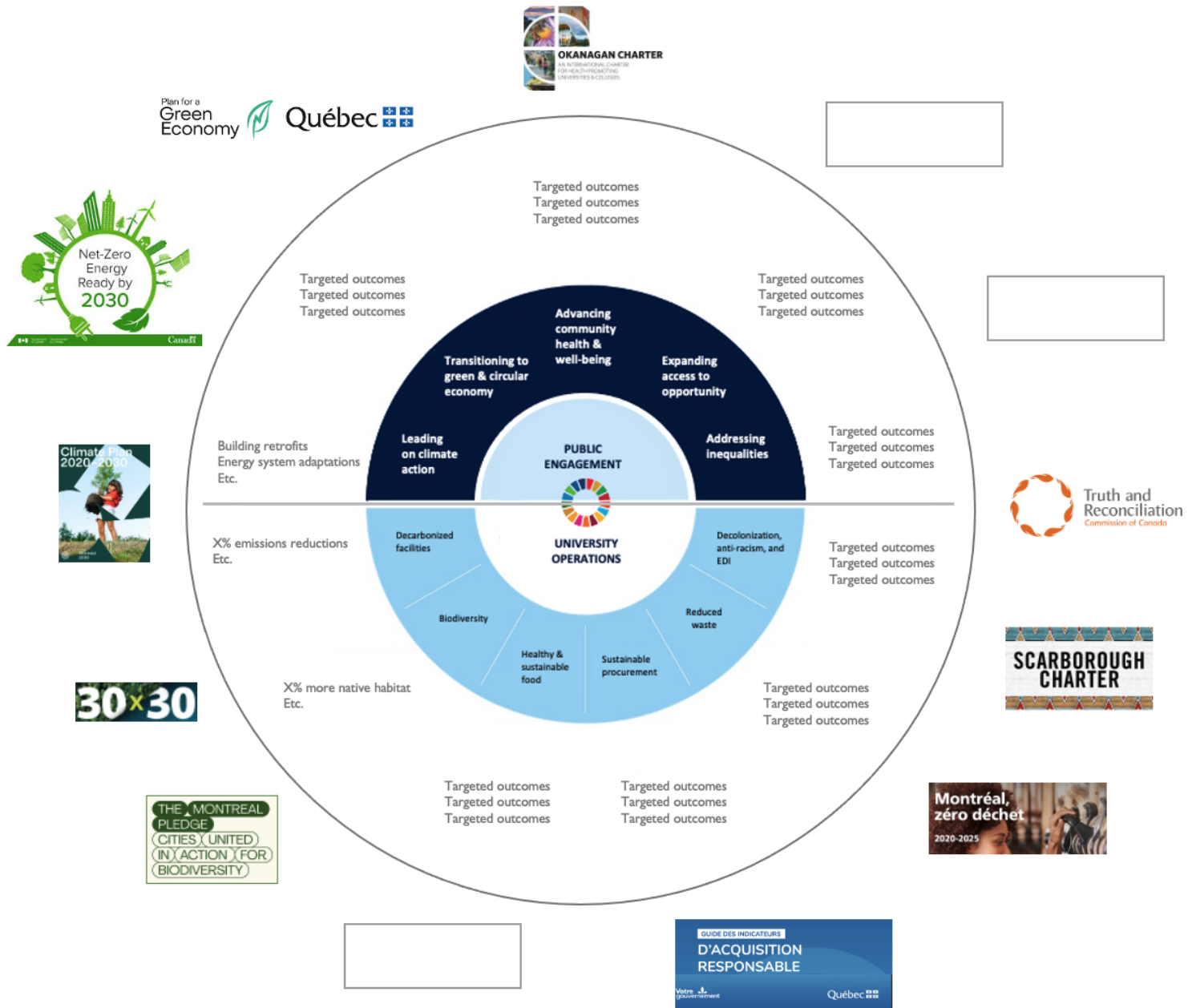
IDENTIFYING PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA

As seen in Appendix 11, the 17 Rooms exercise generated a wide array of ideas for what Concordia might do to respond to the Global Goals. A Sustainable Impact Agenda provides a basis for filtering and prioritizing these potential action items.

The annotated agenda on the next page identifies a suite of current and potential actions associated with each of the five public engagement priorities, drawing on 17 Rooms ideas. In two areas—climate action and addressing inequality—there is an indicated combination of public engagement and campus operations efforts, signaling the potential for complementarity and strong linkages between internally- and externally-facing work. Action items related to the university operations are not elaborated here as they are provided by the relevant action plans.

Note that the identified "direct" targets associated with each action area are things that Concordia has first-hand ability to control in terms of outcomes, while "shared" targets are things that we can only contribute to indirectly, thus requiring collaborative work with partners and stakeholders.

PURSUING A SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA

The implications of committing to an impact agenda like the one presented above are potentially significant for Concordia.

Because the agenda is built around Concordia's existing strengths and capacities, pursuing it would not necessarily require developing a series of new initiatives or investing significant additional resources. As seen in the documentation in this report, there is no shortage of evidence of work being already done around the agenda's priorities in a variety of offices, research units, courses and programs, and student groups. In many cases, increased connection, interaction, and coordination between various actors may sufficiently advance the agenda in its various facets.

That said, if the Sustainable Impact Agenda is going to be something more than a performative declaration, it will require sustained attention, effort, and focused development. New initiatives, structures, and resources may indeed be needed to ensure that Concordia convincingly delivers on its commitment.

FIGURE 7 | EXAMPLE ACTION ITEMS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA

Climate action leadership

PLAN/NET ZERØ building retrofits and related campus-based research projects

Volt-Age research and community living lab projects

UNIVER/CITY 2030 projects that advance the goals of the Montreal Climate Plan 2020-2030 (Climate R&D Agenda, Climate Data Hub, and project accelerators)

Microcredentials in climate-related sustainability

Climate-related course and program offerings

Institutional fly-less policy

[Etc.]

Targets

DIRECT: campus emissions and climate education
SHARED: MTL building-related emissions

Green economy transitions

Internships and co-op placements in 'green economy' companies

Microcredentials and other training offerings for green businesses

Program to support faculty and students aiming to make policy interventions related to sustainable consumption and production

Targeted support program for low-carbon startups

More ambitious sustainable procurement practices at the university

[Etc.]

Targets

DIRECT: Increased placements and HQP training
SHARED: TBD

Community health & well-being

Joint initiatives linking Concordia's community health, cities, and climate action efforts

Expanded range of community health-related internships and co-op placements

Deepened partnerships with community organizations such as GiantSteps (fitness for autistic children) and MUHC (fitness for cancer patients) and

Campus-based action research projects integrating research, education, and services, including efforts focused on indigenous health

Partnership with D3 for innovation in medical technology

[Etc.]

Targets

DIRECT: TBD
SHARED: TBD

Postsecondary access

Access initiatives targeting participation and graduation rates of Indigenous students, first-generation and low-income students, students in MTL neighborhoods with low social/economic mobility, women in STEM, students with disabilities, returning students, etc

Expansion of programs like GirlSET to help address gender imbalances in some academic programs

Additional bridging programs and pathways for mature and returning students

Targeted fundraising effort that backs a Concordia commitment to addressing needs of community members living in poverty
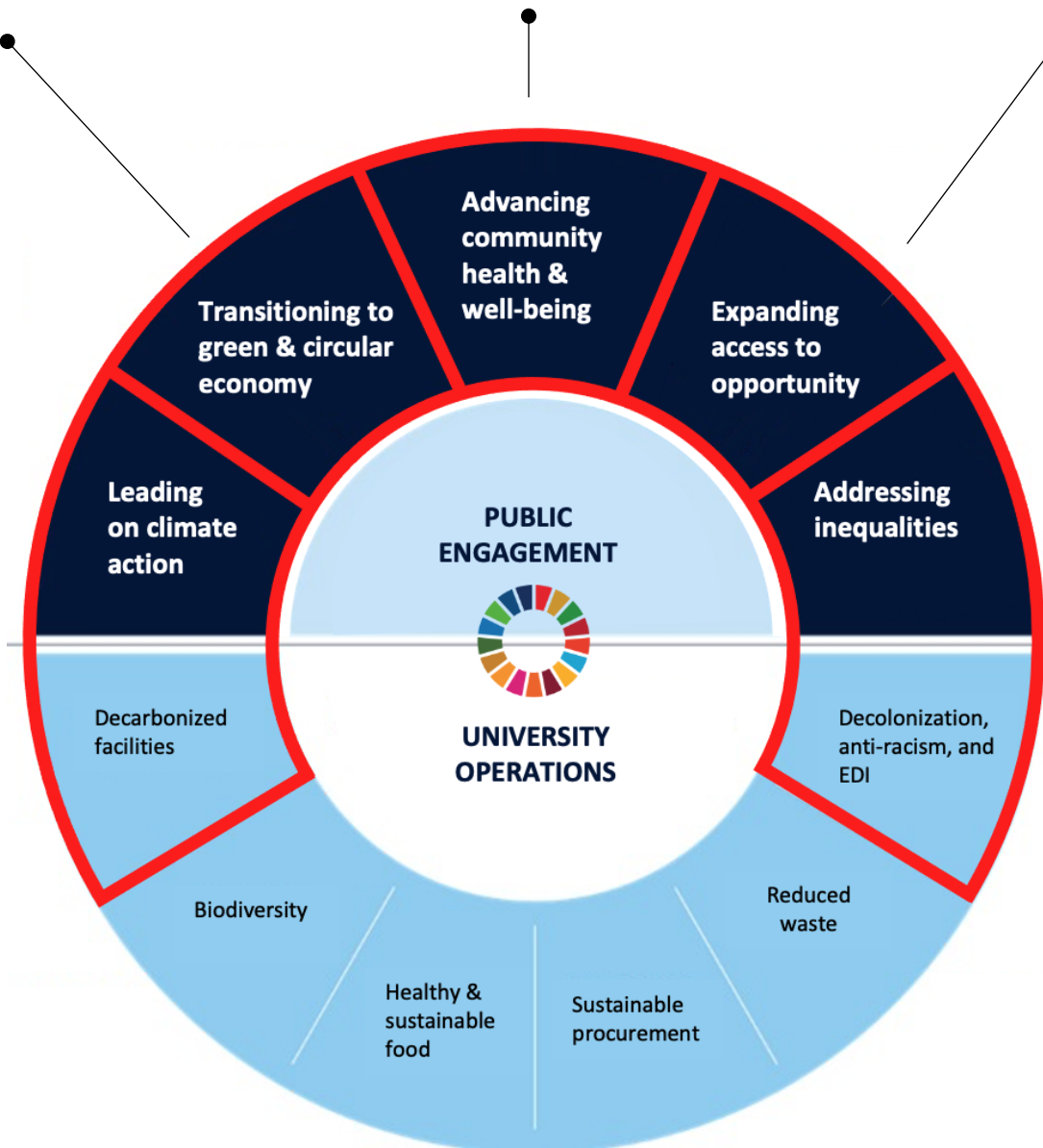
[Etc.]

Targets

DIRECT: Participation/grad rates of various targeted groups
SHARED: % university graduates in targeted MTL boroughs

Addressing inequalities

Development of a flagship university initiative linking research, teaching, and university services focused on addressing inequalities

An 'inclusive urbanization' research & innovation agenda for Montréal

A university equity audit

An equity living lab on campus to test interventions

Strategy on addressing impacts of poverty and food insecurity

[Etc.]

Targets

DIRECT: TBD
SHARED: TBD

Advancing community health & well-being

Transitioning to green & circular economy

Expanding access to opportunity

Leading on climate action

Addressing inequalities

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

Decarbonized facilities

Decolonization, anti-racism, and EDI

Biodiversity

Reduced waste

Healthy & sustainable food

Sustainable procurement

II. ORGANIZE THE REQUIRED INFRASTRUCTURE TO DELIVER ON THE SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA

Impact infrastructure refers to the resources and capacities we deploy to support work that advances SDG-aligned economic, social, and environmental goals.

The recommendations below are focused on developing the kinds of support measures that are needed to deliver on a Sustainable Impact Agenda. Most of these recommendations echo the main takeaways from the 17 Rooms exercise, with the clear message from that process being that more effective contributions to our SDG-related priorities requires more effective organizational strategies and facilitative structures.

As with any aspect of university activity, additional resources can produce improved results. But given resource constraints, the primary focus below is less on paying for improvement through increased resourcing, and more on how we can *organize ourselves for impact*, that is, how we can integrate impact considerations into the regular ways we do our work as a university, aligning our processes, structures, and capacities with our strategic priorities.

This recommendation has seven component parts:

Component 1: A concerted support system for research impact of all kinds

Research and research-creation are impactful in a variety of ways, within and beyond the academic milieu. The various routes to different kinds of impact—academic, cultural, political, environmental, technological, etc.—might be thought of as impact pathways. A support system that strengthens impact for all kinds of research would mark out these pathways and organize information, resources, and contributions from various university offices and teams along them. Creating this kind of support system entails moving from model of research impact being the responsibility of individual researchers and research teams to being something supported by institutional concertation.
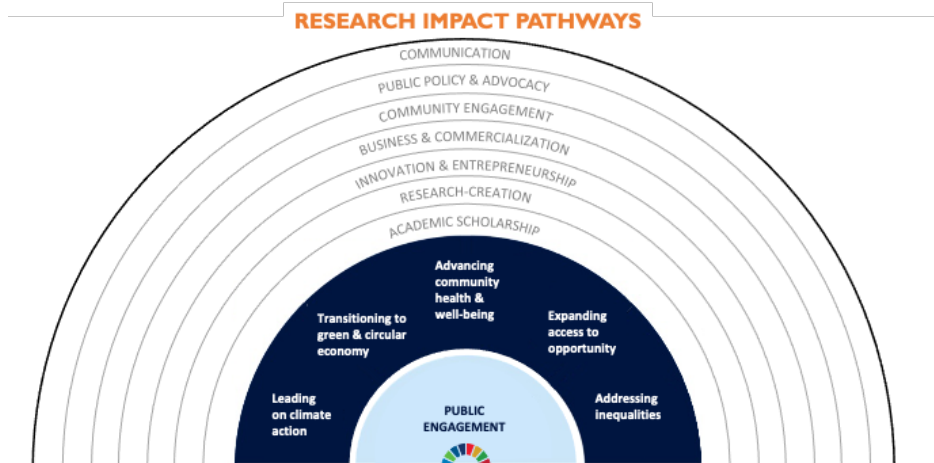
**Component 2: Seed funding for impact-oriented research collaboration**

This component builds on the [Sustainable Transitions Team Research Initiative](#) (STTRI), which the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies launched during the early stages of the VUR process. The initiative provides small grants that support "early-stage development of solutions-oriented research/creation and innovation focused on addressing a sustainability challenge related to one or more of the SDGs." If the seed granting program proves effective and if resources allow, the STTRI might be expanded upon to catalyze larger and more ambitious research initiatives.

Component 3: Cross-unit teaching opportunities

This component spotlights the potential development of things like cross-Faculty SDG-related capstone courses, action-research theses, or summer schools. These kinds of opportunities leverage our successes in recent years in developing cross-Faculty and multi-disciplinary research programs—for example, around digital arts, aging, cities, Indigenous Futures, AI, and, most recently, electrification—and promise to create rich learning experiences for students to dive into immersive contexts related to complex societal challenges with their peers in a range of disciplines; build systemic perspectives on and multi-dimensional understandings of these challenges; cultivate empathy and a shared sense of purpose in relation to those most impacted by societal failures and injustices; and begin to contribute to situated and collaborative forms of sustainable impact, developing in the process a sense of competence, agency, and solidarity.

Component 4: A bolstered program for using the campus as a living lab

This component addresses the repeated calls from 17 Rooms participants to use the 'campus as a living lab' model as a way to advance Concordia's engagement with the SDGs. The campus operations portion of the Sustainable Impact Agenda identifies a range of SDG-related areas in which we might utilize the living lab model of collaborative experimentation and innovation. Because of the [PLAN/NET ZERO](#), we can expect a sizable portfolio of research projects involving faculty, staff, and students to come online over the coming years. There will likely be similar opportunities stemming from [Volt-Age](#). Campus Living Lab program focused on the Sustainable Impact Agenda would build on the [Sustainability Living Lab Funding Program](#), which is co-organized by the Office of the Sustainability and Sustainability Action Fund.
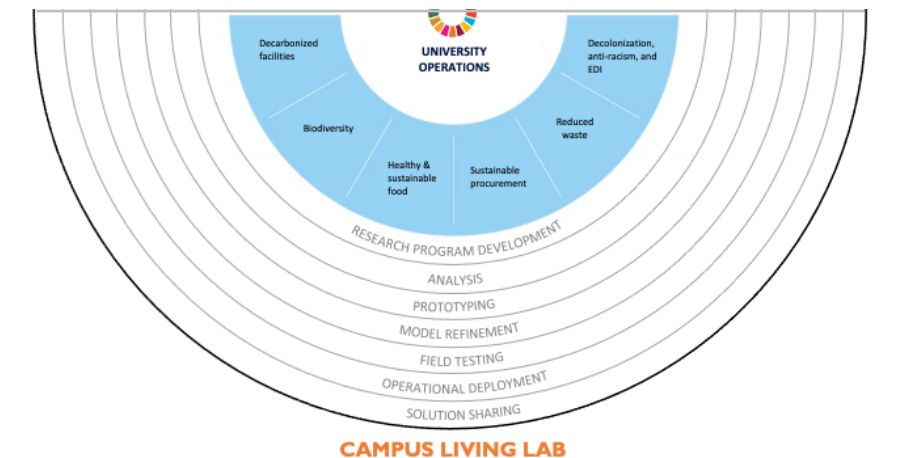
Component 5: Impact teams that advance sustainable impact priorities and cultivate strategic partnerships

This component is intended to strengthen our capacity to mobilize a full range of institutional assets capacities around our sustainable impact priorities. Improved coordination and coherence between researchers, students, offices and teams is one important way for Concordia to become more impactful, even without new infusions of resources.

Impact teams might be convened around some or all of the public engagement priorities put forward in the Sustainable Impact Agenda, working together to identify and convene key stakeholder groups; develop shared goals and coordinated activities with governments and other stakeholder groups; gather, analyze, and publicly report data related to progress on these shared goals; influence legislation and policymaking; etc.

The graphic below identifies a range of central offices and teams that might participate on impact teams, along with the different areas of activity that might be better coordinated to heighten impact.

Component 6: Impact-supportive tenure and promotion processes for faculty

In addition to the above components, delivering on a Sustainable Impact Agenda also requires ensuring that there is as much alignment as possible between our impact goals and the ways that we recognize and reward faculty work, in particular through guidelines for evaluating faculty for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. The need for re-evaluating these guidelines in light of Concordia's commitments around community engagement and equity has been repeated in numerous consultation processes over the years, but substantive changes in evaluation processes have not yet been made. Important models may be available from certain academic departments with long histories of valuing activities other than conventional measures of academic output and productivity.

Component 7: Learning and development offerings

Equipping faculty, staff and students who want to influence public policy, do advocacy work, and pursue other forms of sustainable impact is the final area of focus with respect to impact infrastructure. Resource limitations are a key constraint here, but an important starting point is to identify the needs and opportunities. These kinds of offerings would be integrated with the research impact pathways program described above. Three clear emphases emerged from the 17 Rooms process:

- Impact strategy
- Policy advocacy
- Partnership development

Component 8: Support for open science, open scholarship, and open data

Openly sharing research findings and data facilitates collective problem-solving and innovation in addressing sustainability and other important societal challenges. It also helps to ensure accountability and reproducibility in research, allowing findings to be scrutinized and built upon by the broader scientific community, and is coherent with public engagement practices that see societal stakeholders as key partners in research. Concordia, with leadership from the Libraries, has initiated multiple efforts related to advancing open practices, as documented in a 2023 working group report, but more can be done to "broaden the dialogue and raise awareness of the advantages of open science for scientific research across disciplines."

III. DEVELOP NEW WAYS TO ENSURE PROGRESS ON AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AGENDA

Meaningful and well-integrated assessment practices are needed to ascertain whether advances are being made on the agenda, and whether our resources and capacities are being effectively deployed in support of this agenda.

This recommendation is in line with the 17 Rooms takeaway related to rigorously assessing and tracking progress on SDG-aligned institutional commitments. As noted above in the introduction to the recommendations, the aim is to focus attention on outcomes, not just inputs, activities, and outputs.

The challenges here are manifold, entailing—

- The wide distribution of responsibilities: The SDGs are broad, and activities related to them are spread across the institution, with an array of gaps and overlaps.

- Locating accountability: Because responsibilities are widely distributed, it is less than clear how to assign accountabilities for the overarching outcomes we aim to achieve.

- The efficacy of reporting: Reports are the default tool for ensuring follow-through on commitments, but the value derived from reporting activities can be quite low when there is no clear purpose to reporting, no invested and empowered audience receiving the reports, and no clear implications attached to what is reported.

- Capacity constraints: Rigorously assessing and tracking progress on institutional commitments requires a significant investment of time and human resources.

The STARS evaluation and the THE Impact Ranking can provide some level of tracking and progress reporting related to an impact agenda. In addition, reporting associated with specific action plans, for example, those around sustainability, EDI, Indigenous Directions, and anti-Black racism, already constitute significant investments in progress tracking and accountability. The recommendation below focuses on what else might be done in this regard.

This recommendation has five component parts:

Component 1: Honest, constructive auditing and progress reporting

Like many large organizations, Concordia is brimming with important initiatives, but our ability to honestly assess our progress toward the goals of these initiatives is less developed than our ability to organize and launch them. Bolstering our capacities in this area is important if we want to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the Sustainable Impact Agenda. One area to initiate our efforts in this area is with an equity audit, and idea that was raised during the 17 Rooms process.

Component 2: Robust indicators

Concordia uses a range of indicators to gauge our performance as an organization, and there is regular indicator-infused reporting on things like the Sustainability Action Plan, but Concordia does not yet have in place an indicator set that provides a comprehensive overview of our performance on the full spectrum of societal commitments such as those outlined in the Sustainable Impact Agenda. The University of Edinburgh's Social Responsibility and Sustainability KPI dashboard, and the University of Manchester's Stocktake Report and its strategic plan success measures, provide examples of robust work at other universities around indicators. (See Appendix 14 for more information about these examples.)

Component 3: Activity tracking tools

Software tools that help us efficiently track the scope and intensity of social impact-related activities of Concordia's faculty, staff, and students would be immensely helpful for recognizing, reporting on, and communicating about these activities. A starting point here might be JMSB's experience with ACADEM.

Component 4: Generative feedback loops

One way to get perspective on the effectiveness of our impact-related work is to gather input from a broad range of stakeholders—graduates, employers of our graduates, organizations we partner with, other educational institutions, local governments, community partners, etc. Our current feedback-gathering practices are relatively ad hoc and unintegrated, signaling a need for better mechanisms to efficiently gather actionable input from a broad range of stakeholders.

Component 5: Board-level engagement

Concordia's Board structure has mechanisms in place to monitor university finances, human resources, real estate planning, and other important areas of university management, but there is no structured way for governors to learn about and contribute to advancing Concordia's social impact activities and strategies. For a university that wants to position itself as a substantial contributor to a global agenda focused on protecting the planet and "leaving no one behind," having Board-level engagement on the institution's pursuit of a Sustainable Impact Agenda seems like an important desiderata.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this report has been to present a relatively large body of evidence of Concordia's activities implicitly and explicitly related to the UN SDGs and, on the basis of this evidence, articulate how Concordia can do more to advance vitally important economic, social, and environmental goals that set us on a path to sustainable futures.

As noted in the Introduction, there are important reasons to be critical of the SDGs and to recognize their limitations as direct guides to university action. Nonetheless, as demonstrated in this report, the Global Goals nonetheless provide a useful framework for honest reflection and institutional strategizing.

This kind of critical reflection is timely. 2030 is not far off, increasing the urgency of concerted action on the kinds of targets put forward by the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we are also approaching Concordia's 50th anniversary, which invites us to consider the foundations we want to lay for the university's next half-century.

The hope is that this report prompts important reflections and decisions at this important juncture in Concordia's history, with inspiration from a global agenda focused on peace, justice, shared prosperity, and a healthy planet.