

## **SAF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**August 17th, 2026**

**[ONLINE]**

**Meeting Time:** 16:30 - 18:00

**Meeting Facilitator:** Abraham Dawidziak Kiermaier

**Meeting Minute Taker:** India-Lynn Upshaw-Ruffner

### **Members in attendance:**

Duha Elmardi (SAF)

Iqbal Hussain (SAF)

Mai Pradhan (SAF)

Paige Keleher (Sustainable Concordia)

Rhonda Chung (GSA)

Zoe Erika- Okoye (CSU Executive)

Somayeh Rashvand (Student-at-large)

Yasmine Kaced (Student-at-Large)

Annick Davignon (Concordia Faculty)

### **Members absent:**

Sarah Aspler (CSU Council)

Mia Cataquiz (FASA)

Snigdhodeb Dutta (Arts & Science)

Juliette Weil (Concordia Staff)

### **1. Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement**

### **2. Review and Approval of Minutes**

- a. March: [SAF \[2026-04-01\].pdf - Google Drive](#)
- b. April: [SAF \[2026-04-24\].pdf - Google Drive](#)
- c. June: [SAF \[2026-06-29\].pdf - Google Drive](#)

**Motion** to approve the March, April, and June Minutes:

- **Moved by: Paige**
- **Seconded by: Annick**
  - In favour: all
  - Against: none
  - Abstain: none
- *Motion passes*

### **3. Review and Adoption of Agenda**

**Motion** to approve the [August 17, 2026] agenda:

- **Moved by: Paige**
- **Seconded by: Annick**
  - In favour: all
  - Against: none
  - Abstain: none
- *Motion passes*

#### **4. SAF General Updates**

- a. AGM prep
  - i. Sept 21st, 6-9 pm a QPIRG Concordia
  - ii. 5 board seats are open and the announcement will be made soon!
- b. [AGM 2025 Minutes](#) (board vote needed)

**Motion** to approve the AGM minutes tentatively pending India-Lynn's implementation of COCo consultant recommendations:

- **Moved by: Annick**
- **Seconded by: Somayeh**
  - In favour: all
  - Against: none
  - Abstain: none
- *Motion passes*

#### **5. Committee Updates**

##### **a. HR/Governance**

- i. Members met with COCo consultant for AGM prep and took on some roles

##### **b. SPC**

- i. No updates

##### **c. Finncomm**

- i. No updates

##### **d. Marketing/Outreach**

- i. No updates

#### **6. Project Funding**

Short summary of 2025-26 funding:

- a. Project funding annual budget: \$150,000
- b. Allocated so far: \$48,200
- c. Remaining until May 31st, 2027: \$101,800
- d. Total requested this period: \$53,200
- e. SAF is still doing our audit, but SAF is also applying to external funding, and communicating with Concordia Finance services to discuss fee-levies
- f. With new funding structure SAF reimbursements are a lot more consistent

**Regular Project Funding Annual Budget (2026-27): \$150,000**

**Funding Allocated so far: \$48,200**

**Total Project Funding Remaining until May 31 2027: \$101,800**

Total requested for this funding period: [\$53,200]

SPC committee approved projects

- [Summer 2026 applications](#)
- [Summary of the applications](#)

## Board of Directors Project Funding Discussion

### Project 1: [Sustainable Resilience Project](#)

- Requesting [\$5,000]
- Timeline: November 2026
- Presented by [Duha](#)
  - Notes
    - Student exhibition: themed on community, energy, resources, and technology
    - SAF has funded many student art exhibitions in the past
    - Sustainable Resilience is a week-long interdisciplinary art exhibition (November 16–22) featuring 10 emerging artists whose work explores empowerment, community development, sustainability, social justice, and the natural environment.
    - The exhibition is curated by three Concordia Fine Arts students and provides professional development opportunities for artists, curators, and workshop facilitators.
    - Artists are selected through an open call emphasizing sustainable art-making practices and the principles of ecofeminism.
    - The project aims to create dialogue around sustainable community development while increasing visibility for emerging artists.
    - Approximately 230 people are expected to be engaged through the exhibition and workshops, including around 200 exhibition visitors and 15 participants per workshop.
    - Their sustainability practices are informed by research from the Faculty of Fine Arts Gallery (FoFA), Kelly Jazvac's Sustainable Sculpture course, Kim Kraczon and the Node Centre, and collaboration with the Concordia Centre for Creative Reuse (CUCCR).
    - Environmental initiatives include eco-based labels and signage and reducing exhibition waste, avoiding virgin soft plastics and vinyl signage, and encouraging sustainable packaging, transportation, and reuse of materials and artworks.
    - The Workshops and Public Programming include:

- Jacquelyn Mills: Film screening and artist talk on Geographies of Solitude, highlighting eco-friendly filmmaking and environmental stewardship.
- Lila Mestre: Body-based workshop connecting movement practices to environmental crises.
- Marc-Alain Felix: Sustainable materials workshop exploring the reclamation and reuse of discarded cardboard.
- Po B.K. Lomani: Discussion on land-based practices in intermedia art.
- Public vernissage to be held on Thursday evening.
- They will be inviting representatives from the following groups: FoFA Gallery, The Refugee Centre, Montreal Arts Interculturels (MAI), Access in the Making Lab, Maison d'Haiti, Centre Kabir and getting promotional support from student groups like Angry Art Club, Tea and Oranges, Le Frigo Vert, Sex and Self, and Sustainability and Diversity Students Association (SDSA).
- They will also invite Kelly Jazvac's Sustainable Sculpture class and the broader Concordia community.
- The project seeks to transform the gallery into an active space for learning, discussion, and collective action on sustainability and community empowerment.
- A possible venue is Atelier 2112 and food will be from either people's potato, Le frigo vert or milton parc bar co-op.
- Collaborations, Funding & Partnerships:
  - Kelly Jazvac, Concordia Sculpture Professor, project advisor
  - The refugee center
  - FASA
- Budget:
  - Total budget: \$5,000
  - Asking for: \$5,000
  - Budget Breakdown: Gallery space rental, food, transportation, equipment rental, payment for professional workshops, posters
- I-L: Have taken Kelly Jazvac's course and it was great and had really engaged students
- Somayeh: project sounds great, I am inclined to fully fund it
- Annick: I'm wondering if there are other places where art projects could be funded? I love the project, its more of an observation
  - Duha: We are popular in the Fine Arts and with their students. We are trying to think of ways to do better promo with other faculties. In general the profs in these faculties know more about SAF funding than other faculties Currently there is very limited funding at Concordia nowadays. Unfortunately many funding streams at Concordia are no longer supporting student projects
  - I-L: yeah there definitely are few ways at Concordia for art students to get funding, SAF is a reliable source to apply to with exhibition ideas.

**Motion** to approve full funding of [\$5,000] to the [Sustainable Resilience Exhibition] project.

- **Moved by: Annick**
- **Seconded by: Somayeh**
  - In favour: all
  - Against: 0
  - Abstain: 0

- *Motion passed unanimously;*

## Project 2: [Manara Project]

- Requesting [\$5,000]
- Timeline: September 2026
- Presented by [Duha]
  - Notes
    - The name “Manara,” meaning lighthouse or beacon, symbolizes cultural orientation and continuity.
    - Manara is a Concordia student Palestinian-led cultural education initiative focused on preserving, organizing, and transmitting Palestinian history, language, culture, geography, collective memory, and political knowledge across generations and geographies.
    - The project responds to the fragmentation of Palestinian knowledge caused by occupation, settler colonialism, forced displacement, censorship, curriculum alteration, the destruction of educational and cultural institutions, and the separation of Palestinians across Palestine, refugee camps, host countries, and the diaspora.
    - Many Palestinian children and youth receive fragmented or uneven knowledge because families often lack the time, age-appropriate materials, teaching structures, multilingual resources, or community support needed to provide organized intergenerational education.
    - Manara prioritizes internal Palestinian community-building by creating protected affinity spaces where Palestinians can discuss their own educational needs without being required to explain Palestine to external audiences.
    - The first stage will consist of four facilitated workshops/conversations, with at least two sessions held at or near Concordia.
    - Participants will include Palestinian students, youth, parents, educators, artists, researchers, and community knowledge-holders, with a target of approximately 30 unique participants, including at least 15 Concordia students.
    - The proposed sessions are:
      - Conversation 1: Palestinian Community Agreements: Building Respect Across Differences: A participatory session in which participants collectively develop principles for respectful engagement across political, social, and personal differences. The session emphasizes that no individual should be treated as less Palestinian, or have their identity and belonging questioned because of their views, background, experiences, or circumstances
      - Conversations 2: Learning Palestine Across Generations: What Was Available Then, and What Is Available Now?: A reflective session exploring what opportunities participants had to learn about Palestinian history, culture, identity, and community as children and youth and what educational resources are available to them today. Participants will identify gaps in existing curricula and programming and discuss what future generations need to develop a grounded, inclusive, and meaningful connection to Palestinian identity.
      - Conversations 3: Roots, Identity, and Well-Being: The Mental Health Impact of Cultural Education: This session explores the relationship between cultural education, identity, and mental well-being. Participants will reflect on how access

or lack of access to Palestinian history, culture, language, and community knowledge can shape a person's sense of belonging and self-understanding. The discussion will examine identity confusion and disconnection, as well as their emotional and intergenerational effects on individuals, children, and families. Participants will also consider how culturally grounded education can strengthen confidence, belonging, resilience, and family connections.

- **Conversations 4: From Reflection to Action: Building a Framework for Palestinian Cultural Education:** This final session will bring together the insights from the previous discussions to begin shaping a practical framework for the project. Participants will identify shared values, priorities, learning goals, target age groups, and possible program formats. They will generate ideas for culturally grounded activities, curriculum content, language learning, family engagement, community partnerships, and mental-health supports. The session will conclude with proposed next steps, roles, and recommendations for developing the project.
- Sessions will be trauma-aware, confidential, intergenerational, and accessible, with English and Arabic offered as capacity allows.
- Immediate project outcomes will include: An anonymized community needs-assessment report, Community-defined curriculum priorities, Preliminary guiding principles for future curriculum development, An initial map of subjects and age groups, Recommendations for the next phase, A network of potential research and curriculum collaborators
- Potential curriculum subjects may include Palestinian history, geography, Arabic language and dialects, literature, oral history, arts, foodways, agriculture and ecology, political vocabulary, social movements, refugee experiences, community care, and everyday cultural practices.
- Future phases may include pilot testing with different age groups, followed by the development of multilingual curricula, books, activity guides, digital resources, facilitator training, and international partnerships with Palestinian communities.
- The curriculum will be modular and continuously revised, allowing communities to adapt materials to local contexts while maintaining a shared Palestinian foundation.
- The project supports student-led and community-accountable knowledge creation, with Palestinian students helping shape the questions, evaluate the workshops, and inform future project phases.
- Outreach will prioritize Palestinian Concordia students while building connections with the wider Montreal Palestinian community through student groups, faculty and departmental networks, community organizations, cultural networks, peer organizers, and trusted community contacts.
- Recruitment will use targeted, trust-based outreach, including bilingual digital materials, social media, newsletters, direct invitations, and participant referrals.
- Participation will be free, with accessibility measures such as halal food, accessible venues, public-transit-friendly locations, and possible transportation or childcare support and Participant privacy will be protected.
- Collaborations, Funding & Partnerships:
  - Concordia student associations
  - Concordia Palestinian student groups, faculty & students
  - Wider Palestinian community in Montreal

- Budget:
  - Total budget: \$5,000
  - Asking for: \$5,000
  - Budget Breakdown: 80 hours @\$35/hour for student coordinator, facilitation for sessions, student researcher for needs assessment report, translation, transcription and digital tools, equipment
- It has been really difficult for Manara project organisers to get funding through institutions. Students involved in the project have been funded by SAF in another project through SCPA speaker series, they are highly organised and thorough
- Yasmine: the project sounds very thought out, and it is very relevant to what is going on currently. You can tell that they might get refused from funding a lot based on how thorough they are with their application. It makes me really emotional this is an important project
- Annick: this project isn't supported by any profs or faculty, Annick is interested in supporting the project as a faculty member. Would be great for the HSI department (Human Systems Intervention)

Motion to approve full funding of [\$5,000] to the [Concordia Bridges: Inclusive Arts Initiative pt 2] project.

- **Moved by: Yasmine**
- **Seconded by: Zoe**
  - In favour: all
  - Against: 0
  - Abstain: 0
- *Motion passed unanimously;*

#### 7. Community Announcements and Ancillary Items

- Duha mentions application delays with AGM, due to it being in September, there will be many project applications come September and with our current board meeting schedule it might be overwhelming come November for new board members + orientation time

#### 8. Adjournment