

CSU Legal Information Clinic (LIC)
Annual Summary Report
May 2024 - April 2025

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Mandate

The CSU Legal Information Clinic (LIC) is a free service that provides legal information, referrals, and accompaniment in both French and English to undergraduate and more recently, graduate Concordia students. The LIC offers information related to issues on immigration, discrimination, human and civil rights, fines, sexual violence, consumer protection, small claims, contracts, business and many other areas of law.

The LIC's mandate of access to justice also encompasses community outreach and collaborative projects with community organizations or other CSU departments to address systemic racism and discrimination.

Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach

The LIC dedicates a significant amount of time to each case, ranging from 2-8 hours for simpler cases and more extensive time for more complex cases. On average, clients require multiple consultations, appointments, and follow-ups for legal information and assistance with complex and sensitive issues. The LIC works with Sexual Assault and Resource Centre (SARC) to facilitate training for staff and volunteers at the LIC, which is trauma-informed and survivor-centered, particularly for cases involving sexual violence, discrimination, and trauma.

Wellness and Empowerment Model

The LIC uses a wellness and empowerment model to check the well-being and safety of the student clientele and to take the necessary time and care to listen to them, their questions, their frustrations, their confusion and to help them arrange their thoughts.

With the assistance of supervising lawyers and law students, we initially meet and help clients to organize their documents and the facts pertaining to their situation, to understand their various needs and issues, both legal and non-legal, such as stress, trauma, academics, mental health, immigration status or other difficulties affecting them in their immediate lives.

The LIC carefully explains and educates students through legal information, research and examples on all their possible options so that they can come to a fully informed decision themselves on which choices are best for them, especially since they will ultimately bear the consequences of their decisions.

Through this empowerment and wellness approach, supported by supervising lawyers and law students, over 90% of students seeking assistance are satisfied with the legal information and support provided by

the LIC. Consequently, these students do not require to incur the additional legal fees or costs of a private lawyer.

Grassroots Knowledge, Community-Based Ecosystem of CSU- Concordia Services

The LIC is an integral component of the ecosystem of CSU services for students, Concordia, and the community at large. This ecosystem encompasses our in-depth grassroots knowledge and collaborative efforts with the resources available to students at the CSU, Concordia University, and Concordia community. These resources include the HOJO, CSU Advocacy, International Student Office, Sexual Assault Resource Centre, Counselling and Psychological Services, Centre for Gender Advocacy, Access Centre for Students with Disabilities, Multi-faith and Spirituality Centre, Centre for Research Action and Race Relations, Q-PIRG Concordia, Solidarity Across Borders, and other relevant organizations.

Through these means, the LIC provides timely, holistic, multifaceted, and intersectional services to individuals in need.

Enhanced Clinic Accessibility through Hybrid System

Following structural modifications to enhance student accessibility to the LIC during the pandemic, the LIC implemented a hybrid system. During its open office hours, the LIC's administrative assistants maintain a physical presence at the LIC to facilitate walk-in bookings. The remaining LIC team members operate virtually or in person throughout the week. Typically, appointments and meetings are conducted via Microsoft Teams from Monday to Friday; while allowing students the option of scheduling in-person consultations, should they request them. This transition to a hybrid system enabled students to access LIC services from the convenience and safety of their homes, accommodated mobility-challenged clients, and extended services to students residing overseas or outside of Montreal.

Legal Network, Legal Fee Fund, and Legal Representation

Although the LIC and its law student volunteers cannot act as lawyers for clients, the LIC does offer legal representation and legal advice to students through our Legal Network list. We refer students to qualified and experienced lawyers and advocates who are community-oriented and engaged.

The LIC has an annual budget line of about 18000\$ for Legal Fee Funding which the Clinic provides to clients who, in addition to our legal information services, truly need a lawyer for legal representation and

advice, especially if they do not qualify for government legal aid which pays for their lawyer's legal fees and costs.

Of the cases that benefited from the LIC Legal Fee Fund from May 2024 to April 2025, legal representation and fees were provided for twelve grad and undergrad students on the following matters:

- Assisting and defending student protestors with criminal and litigation lawyers particularly those involved in the Gaza humanitarian crisis.
- Sexual & racial discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
- Reviewing Concordia policies on sexual violence following a lawsuit by a survivor of sexual violence on campus.
- Pursuing a civil lawsuit against the City of Montreal for police brutality and racism towards Black students, despite the Quebec Human Rights Commission's refusal to proceed.
- Filing a lawsuit against Concordia and the City of Montreal police for gross negligence by a survivor of sexual violence on campus.
- Providing legal defense for a Black student criminally charged and assaulted by a racist Concordia security guard during a sports activity on campus.
- Assisting a Palestinian refugee with Immigration Canada's overly restrictive Special Measures for Gaza to reunite with his wife, who was at risk in Gaza, and successfully joining him in Montreal.
- Assisting a student pursue an employer for discrimination based on religion in an employment case.
- Ongoing legal representation for racial profiling and victim of police gunfire case.
- Assisting a student for an online intimidation and sexual harassment case.
- Assisting a transgender student for a RAMQ discrimination and gender identity case.

All of these complex cases involved clients who were traumatized and at risk, and whom the LIC has consistently supported, in addition to providing them with legal representation.

In total, the LIC provided \$24,951.27 dollars in legal fee funding to 12 Concordia students' legal cases to cover the costs of their legal representation. Of these 12 students, 8 were undergraduate students, 2 were graduate students, 1 was a community member, and 1 was an undergraduate alumnus.

Statistics

Number of Cases Handled (311)

From May 2024 to April 2025, the LIC has handled a **total of 311 cases**. These cases involved **231 undergraduate** students, **58 graduate** students, 3 undergraduate alumni, 6 graduate alumni, 10 community members, and 3 Concordia staff members. This figure does not include the multiple appointments and follow-ups required for each case.

Number of Hourly Appointments (497)

Due to the complexity of their cases, many students require more than one appointment to address their concerns. From May 2024 to April 2025, the LIC had approximately 497 appointments, with an average duration of 1 hour per appointment.

Research, Case Management, and Student Communications (at least 1000 hours)

In addition to the time spent during appointments, volunteer law students and supervising lawyers allocate approximately 2-4 hours per case to legal information research, case management, and communication with students.

Fields of Law for All Student Categories

The LIC handled cases in various legal fields, including **immigration (approximately 29%)**, **criminal/civil penal infractions and fines (approximately 24%)**, with the remainder of the cases dealing with; harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, family law, business, contracts, intellectual property, and civil disputes. This figure excludes community outreach and collaborative projects with community organizations or other CSU departments.

Summary of Activities: May 2024 - April 2025

Anti-islamophobia Campaign

In collaboration with Concordia's Muslim Student Association (MSA), the LIC developed a questionnaire and successfully launched a contest and campaign against Islamophobia during Fall Orientation 2024. Over 200 students responded to the questionnaire whose goal was to sensitize and encourage Concordia students and community about the nature and impact of Islamophobia and to encourage the reporting of Hate Crimes and incidents.

The LIC also worked with the MSA to lobby the University to be more inclusive in its consultative committee on Campus Security, and to allow a place for the voices of Muslim students who are a particularly vulnerable group at Concordia.

Defense of Student Protestors

Since May 2024, the LIC has spent much time assisting and defending student protestors particularly those involved in the Gaza humanitarian crisis. Whether it be the McGill Encampment or the multiple protests held at Concordia, Concordia students have been continuously intimidated, harassed, detained, and arrested by the police or Concordia security. In particular, the LIC has examined how Concordia Security guards, who are not legally law officers such as the police, have exceeded the legal limits of their powers for citizen's arrest.

In this context, the LIC provided several info sessions on *Citizen's Rights vs Police and Private Security Guards* over the past year to student and community groups at Concordia, such as GSA-CREW International Students and Workers Know your Rights info session, Discordia, CJLO and the Link. Moreover, the LIC provided Know your Rights tools such as its Police and Rights Card educating students on their Civil Rights, and how to deal with Concordia Campus Security guards and the legal limits of their powers for citizen's arrest.

Throughout the year, LIC provides legal information support and accompaniment of thousands of Concordia students and community participants in their marches against the Gaza humanitarian crisis.

Immigrations Changes and Info Sessions

The LIC provided ongoing support and information to international students on the many confusing, arbitrary and unfair applications of federal and Quebec immigration policies and procedures to their immigration files.

However, the main focus of the LIC from May 2024 –April 2025 was dealing with the new provincial immigration reforms implemented in November 2024 and how the new rules unfairly discriminated against non-francophone international students studying in English educational institutions and excluded them from immigrating to Quebec.

Two immigration info sessions on the changes in Quebec immigration law as well as federal immigration law were given by the LIC with a renowned immigration lawyer, Me Ho-Sung KIM, who answered the questions and concerns of the many undergrad and graduate students who participated (more than 100).

Special Immigration Measures for Gaza- CBA Pro Bono Initiatives

One of the community initiatives continued from the previous year to this year was the LIC's collaboration with the Canadian Bar Association to provide legal assistance to individuals affected by the dire and urgent situation in Gaza. In one such case, the LIC assisted a Palestinian refugee with Immigration Canada's overly restrictive Special Measures for Gaza, enabling him to reunite with his wife in Montreal. Another case was assisting an orphaned Palestinian child whose parents were killed during the Gaza conflict to re-unite with his uncle here in Canada.

Community vigil, outreach and grief counselling for Filipino Lapu-Lapu Day Tragedy

Following the horrible Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy on Saturday April 28, 2025 in Vancouver where a young man with serious mental health issues drove a SUV car through a crowded Filipino festival killing eleven people and injured dozens of others, the LIC had been asked by members of the Filipino community in Montreal to assist with the organizing of a community vigil on Monday April 29, 2025 along with the outreach and provision of grief counselling resources to Filipino youth and families. This tragedy underlines the horrible problems and consequences that could result from lack of appropriate social service resources for people with serious mental health issues. Unfortunately, some politicians were trying to use this tragedy for their tough on crime and increased policing platforms.

Fee Levy Vote and Duplication of CSU Services by private corporate Studentcare insurer

There was much confusion during the past year over the community-based services provided by the LIC versus the Legal Essentials Program run by the external private corporate Studentcare insurer, which **duplicates many of the existing core services** already provided by the CSU. Many students were **misinformed and mistakenly believed that the November 2024 referendum vote of a 30\$ fee levy was for the LIC services, which in fact, does not receive any money whatsoever** from the external private corporate Studentcare insurer responsible for the Legal Essentials Program.

GSA Referendum Fee Levy Votes, Exclusion of Graduate Students from LIC Services

Over the past period of May 2024 - April 2025, there has been an increase in graduate student clientele, who are typically older students with more complex professional and personal issues. They have consistently expressed their appreciation for the quality and accessibility of LIC's services, especially international students with problems related to their immigration status.

However, the LIC may soon **no longer be able to assist graduate students** due to continuous attempts by certain individuals to eliminate access to the community-based LIC services and to replace it with the corporate insurer Studentcare Legal Essential's program.

This situation is particularly disappointing. Despite the questionable elimination of the previous GSA- LIC fee levy in March 2024 on the inaccurate grounds that the CSU was closing the LIC, graduate students subsequently voted overwhelmingly to reinstate the GSA fee levy for the LIC in both GSA Referendum votes held in December of 2024 and April 2025. However, both these favorable Referendum results to reinstate the GSA fee levy for the LIC have been contested before the GSA Election Judicial Committee chaired by Patrice Blais, which overturned the December 2024 Referendum vote and possibly the April 2025 Referendum vote. **This could effectively result in the exclusion of all graduate students from the LIC's services.**

ANNEXES:

MSA-LIC anti-islamophobia questionnaire 2024-09
[202409 MSA-LIC anti-islamophobia questionnaire.pdf](#)

Sexual Violence Resources for Concordia Students organigramme
[Sexual Violence Resources for Concordia Students organigramme.pdf](#)

Bike Rights Pamphlet 2024-05
[2024-05 Bike Rights Pamphlet.pdf](#)

Police and Citizen's Rights card 2025
[2023 Police and Citizen's Rights card.pdf](#)

Citizen's rights vs police- private security 20250324- PowerPoint presentation
[Citizen's rights vs police- private security 20250324.pptx](#)

20250212 The Link- Citizen rights vs police and security guards info session
[20250212 Link- Citizen rights vs police and security guards info session.png](#)

Know your Rights info session CJLO-Discordia 20250324
[Know your Rights info session CJLO-Discordia 20250324.png](#)

Immigrating Qc- Canada info session 20241023
[Immigrating Qc- Canada info session 20241023.png](#)

20250225 GSA-CREW International Students and Workers Know your Rights info session
[20250225 GSA-CREW Imm info session.jpg](#)
[20250225 GSA-CREW Imm info session-1.jpg](#)

20250310 Concordia-GSA-LFF- Hearings continue for PhD student jaywalking case
[20250310 Concordian-GSA-LFF- Hearings continue for PhD student jaywalking case.pdf](#)

Special Immigration Measures for Gaza- CBA Pro Bono Initiatives
[Pro-Bono Initiatives | Canadian Bar Association](#)

Community vigil, outreach and grief counselling Filipino Lapu-Lapu Day Tragedy 20250429
<https://vancouversun.com/news/driver-charged-8-counts-murder-vancouver-lapu-lapu-tragedy>.
['Our heart is with Vancouver': Montreal vigil to honour victims of Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy](#)

Fee Levy Vote and Duplication of CSU Services by private corporate Studentcare insurer
[INVESTIGATION: CSU Will Owe Studentcare Around \\$175,000 At Minimum For Trial Period Of Legal Essentials Program | The Concordian](#)
[Student raises concerns with \\$4.2 million Studentcare contract | News – The Link](#)
[CRARR Concerned For Students' Legal Aid Under New Legal Care Plan | The Concordian](#)
[Clash Over Byelection Question On Legal Care Program | The Concordian](#)