

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



**EQUITY @X**

**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER  
UNIVERSITY**

# OVERVIEW

The Human Rights and Equity Advisor, along with Advisors from the Diversity Engagement Centre (DEC), provide a holistic approach to equity and inclusion at StFX.

The Human Rights and Equity Advisor assists all members on campus feel safe, respected and heard. The Advisor creates and reviews policies, and provides an avenue to address complaints through a formal reporting system.

DEC Advisors advocate for students and educate the Xaverian community on matters of equity, diversity & inclusion so students feel they are a part of welcoming campus.

We invite you to connect with us to collectively create an institution free from discrimination and harassment; one that celebrates difference and provides a safer space for people to live authentic lives.



## **DIVERSITY**

recognizes the value in different ways of being and different ways of thinking and knowing. Diversity honours the ways in which our differences enrich our institution. These differences can be both visible (e.g., gender expression, age) and less visible (e.g., culture, ancestry) and includes different world views and experiences. StFX recognizes that diversity and academic excellence are interwoven. Cultivating diversity provides a strategic advantage by fostering creativity and innovation while eliminating barriers to personal growth and intellectual achievement.

## **INCLUSION**

honours diversity in all its forms. It promotes belonging, purpose and safety. StFX strives to create a welcoming environment so that all members of our community can contribute their full potential. We commit to creating vibrant, inclusive communities within StFX.

## **EQUITY**

acknowledges that there are historical and current marginalized and underrepresented populations and this disequilibrium can only be corrected through fair and just processes. We commit to challenging bias, harassment, discrimination and structural inequities in our institution so that students, faculty and staff have fair access to equal opportunities



# HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUITY ADVISOR

The Human Rights and Equity Advisor (HREA) promotes equity work within our institution and responds to allegations of human rights violations. This year, StFX-specific goals for equity, diversity and inclusion were created to ensure that as a community, we are all striving towards a common, inclusive outcome.

An equity planning day was held in August 2018, which identified the need for evidence-based equity data to inform StFX policies and practices. Stfx engaged a third-party provider to survey our workforce. Despite busy end of year schedules, 50% of employees responded to the Workplace Diversity Questionnaire. Results can be viewed on the HREA Website ([www.mystfx.ca/equity](http://www.mystfx.ca/equity)).

Data will be used over the course of the year to determine gaps in policies and practices, and provide us with the insights needed to make StFX an intentionally inclusive community.

**"I am so thankful that StFX has this position on campus! Thank you for listening and helping me and not judging me"**

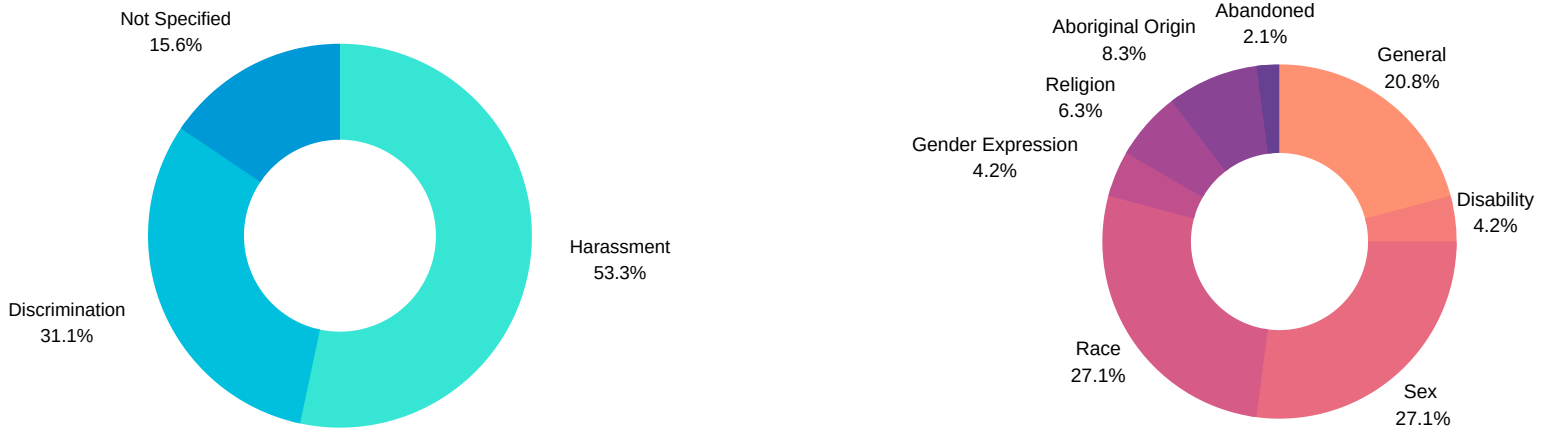
The Harassment and Discrimination policy is undergoing a final round of edits before being released for a broader community review. The new policy dramatically reduces the length of the formal reporting process and aims to provide all parties with a fair and balanced resolution mechanism.

The HREA helps ensure StFX is a welcoming and respectful community for everyone. Services are available to **all** members of the campus community

# HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

September 1 2018- August 31, 2019

## Prohibited Characteristics



During the reporting period, the HREA received 45 complaints. The majority concerned issues of harassment. When prohibited grounds are analyzed, race-based complaints and complaints based on sex (27.1%) account for the majority of issues reported by complainants.

## HARASSMENT

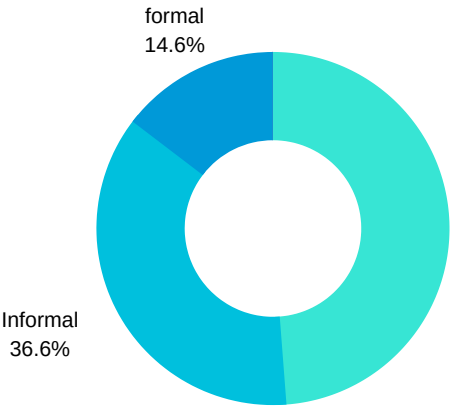
is offensive or objectionable conduct or comment directed toward another person or persons, the instance or persistence of which is known or ought reasonably to be known, from the perspective of a reasonable person in the position of the complainant, to be intimidating, offensive or unwelcome. Such conduct or comment includes but is not limited to that on the basis of any characteristic referred to in section 6 of the Human Rights Act, which has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive work, study or living environment. Harassment includes sexual harassment.

## DISCRIMINATION

is distinctive treatment, whether intentional or not, on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination that is not exempted by section 6 of the Human Rights Act and that has the effect of imposing a burden, obligation or disadvantage on an individual or a class of individuals not imposed upon others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals or classes of individuals.

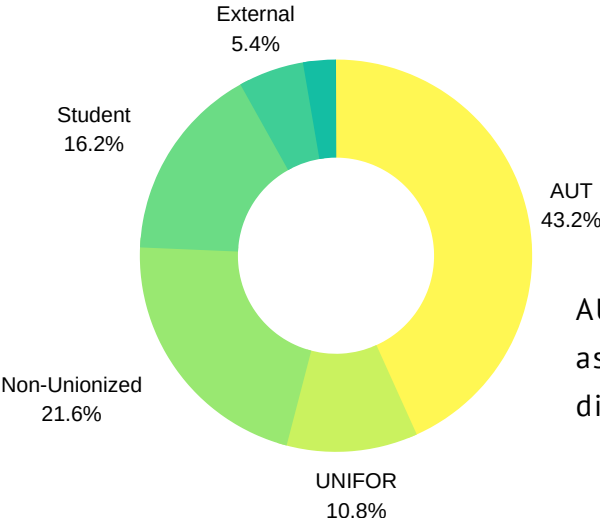
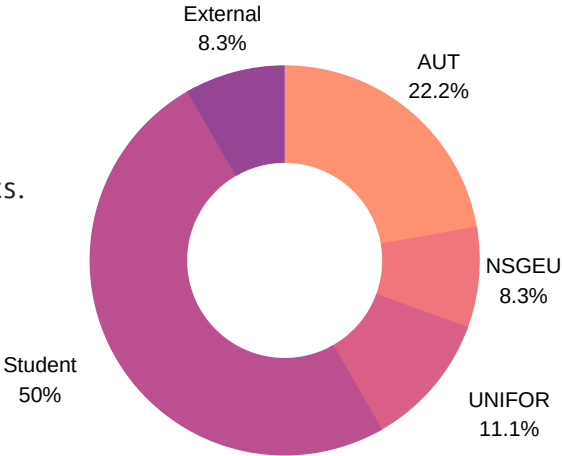
# COMPLAINANT & RESPONDENT STATISTICS

A total of 41 individuals came forward, placing complaints or inquiring about the behaviour of 37 individuals on campus.



The majority of complainants sought general guidance and support. Thirty six percent of complainants pursued informal resolution, while 14.6% sought a formal investigation with findings and outcomes

Students formed the largest group to inquire or place complaints.



AUT members were the largest group identified by Complainants as allegedly committing incidents of harassment and discrimination



# DIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT CENTRE

In September 2018, the Diversity Engagement Centre (DEC) opened on 4th floor Bloomfield. The Manager of Student Experience, the African Descent Student Affairs Advisor, the Indigenous Student Advisor, and the Gender and Sexual Diversity Advisor all have offices in the Centre.

DEC creates and fosters an inclusive environment that acknowledges the current and historic marginalization of equity-seeking groups while providing all Xaverian with the opportunity to learn and engage.

Resources for the centre have been slow to materialize. DEC continues to wait for furniture for the space and for the creation of privacy walls across from the offices so students continue to feel safe and supported.

**"It feels safe here!"**

Despite challenges, marginalized students who feel weary navigating a predominantly white, eurocentric, heteronormative campus recognize DEC as a safe space to retreat and re-energize.



# GENDER & SEXUAL DIVERSITY ADVISOR

The Gender and Sexual Diversity Advisor (GSDA) works primarily to support LGBTQ+ students, but also to celebrate diversity at StFX, and educate the general campus community on 2SLGBTQIA+ identities and issues. Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ students at StFX happens in many ways, such as one-on-one office support for students regarding concerns of gender and sexuality, celebrating and promoting queer culture and diversity at StFX, referring students to other campus and community resources, creating relevant programming to create a 2SLGBTQIA+ community at StFX, and advocating on behalf of 2SLGBTQIA+ students to committees and administration.

The goal of the 2018-2019 academic year was to create a true sense of community among 2SLGBTQIA+ students at StFX. The GSDA and the X-Pride Student Society worked together to focus their efforts on programming that would bring 2SLGBTQIA+ students and their allies together into a tight knit community.

**"It's so incredible to come to these events and see other queer students being so open, connecting with each other and feeling comfortable in these spaces."**

Throughout a very busy 2018-2019 academic year, The GSDA and X-Pride achieved this goal by implementing community building events such as Spill the Tea sessions, monthly X-Pride Coffeehouses, and Pride Month events such as the What I Love About Being Queer screening and panel. Even events focused on education, such as the Contextualizing Stonewall event organized by the StFX History Department and the GSDA Lecture Series which focused on resiliency, worked to bring together 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and faculty in discussion and celebration of the struggles and strength of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.





## AFRICAN DESCENT STUDENT AFFAIRS ADVISOR

The mandate of Office of African Descent Student Affairs (ADSA) is to ensure that students of African descent are well supported, guided and encouraged while making the transition to university and providing academic and transitional assistance throughout their post-secondary career.

ADSA supports students by advocating, mediating, and liaising on behalf of students of African decent, honouring and promoting African culture and diversity at StFX, assisting students with course content, connecting students with volunteering and career opportunities, providing financial information and helping navigate campus resources.

a major milestone this year was the inclusion of kente stoles in the 2019 graduation ceremony. African descent graduates wear the kente cloth stoles to their graduation to symbolize their pride in their heritage, as well as their pride in graduating. This was approximately a 6-month effort that will be implemented as part of the regular graduation regalia. This is a big step for StFX in recognizing the contributions of students of African descent to this campus.

**"Your compassion and kindness and love for your students is so heartwarming"**

As the office continues to grow and adapt to the needs of students, the better it will be able to serve the campus community. ADSA looks forward to building space for students of African descent on campus and providing more opportunities to lead and thrive.

during the winter term  
ADSA had  
**272**  
office visits



# INDIGENOUS STUDENT AFFAIRS ADVISOR

The Office of Indigenous Student Affairs aims to provide a sense of belonging for our Indigenous students. The office recognizes that providing an inclusive environment for all students is imperative to achieving success. However, as the campus still struggles with understanding and education, the idea of belonging can be obstructed.

As a community, we must strive to reconcile the relationship of all Treaty people in Canada. By doing so, Indigenous students would feel respected, included and safe.

To further this goal, opportunities were provided to faculty, staff and students to learn more about Indigenous issues. Culturally relevant supports to students also provided a sense of belonging,

**"It brought a sense of home and comfort being in your office every time, so I just wanted to say thank-you again"**

Other efforts to Indigenize the campus community came through our Reconciliation Committees such as the Joint Advisory Circle, Academic Program Circle and Student Experience and Success Circle. These 3 main circles consult with Mi'kmaq elders/students to ensure that StFX is following the best practices of supporting, guiding and educating our campus community as a whole.

during the winter  
term, ISAA had

**237**

office visits

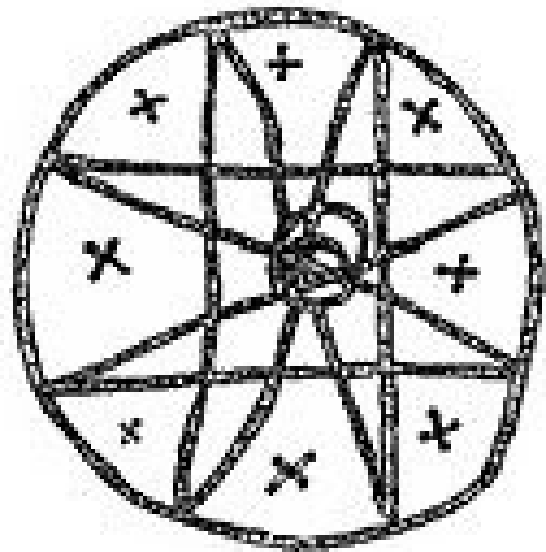


## KNOWLEDGE KEEPER ON CAMPUS

This year, StFX took a significant step towards institutional growth by announcing that Kerry Prosper had become the Universities first knowledge keeper on campus.

Kerry is a respected Mi'kmaw elder, published author and Band Council member from Paqtnkek First Nation.

This has been a year of discovery for the Knowledge Keeper. Kerry is learning more about the campus community and the student needs. students visit for spiritual guidance and knowledge . Kerry also advises committees on Indigenization efforts on campus such as the Academic Program Circle and the Joint Advisory Circle.



# EDUCATION: BY THE NUMBERS

Education and training is an essential component of inclusion and the prevention of human rights violations. Staff at the Diversity Engagement Centre, As well as the Human Rights and Equity Advisor offered many opportunities for students, faculty and staff to engage in learning opportunities..

## 59

events celebrating  
EDI @X

Angela Davis Lecture, Know Your Rights Week, Cultural Resilience Training, Games Night, pop-up barber shop, gender & sexual diversity lecture series Bi-Visibility & Asexuality awareness week, Priscilla Queen of the Highlands annual drag show, treaty day panels, basket making, beading nights, Mi'kmaq language initiatives, learning lodges and student talking circles

**Kairos** Blanket exercises, providing Indigenous awareness, were held over **14** sessions, engaging over **281** faculty, staff & students.

**Positive Space** sessions were held **15** times this year, engaging **120** faculty, staff & Students

**Cultural Competency** workshops were held **6** (??) times over the year, reaching over **200** participants

**Sexual Harassment in the workplace** sessions were held **14** times, engaging **108** participants

## 56

workshops and presentations aimed at increasing participant capacity on EDI

**"The most important things I learned were to recognize my own privilege, that step one in creating a more inclusive environment is to acknowledge that problems described by people different from me are REAL, and that the most important way to be respectful of other people is to demonstrate a commitment to social justice."**

~ workshop participant

# LOOKING FORWARD

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## MAINTAINING MOMENTUM FOR SUCCESS

In 2017, StFX undertook the ambitious task of developing a five year action plan for the University, developing five pillars to steward our institution through the challenges of the current socio-political climate. Equity and inclusion was identified as a key pillar to our success. With only two years left, it is crucial that we examine our progress to ensure StFX is able to meet institutional goals.

The equity goals within StFX's strategic plan are inspirational, but achievable with a significant culture shift and the support and dedication of all Xaverians to make a difference in our community. Given the rural context of our institution, achieving the targets of the plan is imperative, as for many students, campus resources may be the only supports that are tangibly accessible.

Over the upcoming year, multiple initiatives will take place to advance equity work on campus, including finalizing the Diversity Engagement Centre space, creating employment equity and accommodation policies, and increased opportunities for students, faculty and staff to engage and deepen their understanding of diversity and inclusion.