

Terms of Reference for StFX Academic Planning Exercise

(Feb 24, 2021)

Recognizing that the academic mission of the university must drive all university activities, and recognizing that academic planning falls within the purview of the Senate Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APP), APP will undertake a planning exercise to present a clear and distinct vision for the future direction of academics at StFX.

Guiding Principles

The StFX Academic Plan 2022-2027 will reflect the mission, vision, and values of StFX as described in the current StFX Strategic Plan.

Vision: From the finest traditions of liberal education, we are recognized as distinguished scholars, as evidenced by exceptional teaching, learning, and research. We cultivate a vibrant community of academically-focused and socially-engaged students, faculty, and staff from across the country and around the world. We are welcoming, inclusive, and diverse, deeply committed to social justice and social responsibility.

The following guiding principles, derived from the five pillars of the StFX Strategic Plan, will serve as touchpoints for the academic planning exercise:

Academic Excellence

Student learning is at the core of our mission. Our students develop into analytical, creative, and critical thinkers who engage in an ever-changing world with integrity and curiosity.

Student Experience & Opportunity

Our immersive campus environment is centered around social engagement and fosters a sense of purpose, community, and active citizenship.

Social Responsibility & Innovation

As local and global leaders, we collaborate meaningfully and use skill and determination to foster active citizenship and enact positive change. Service is central to our collective identity; in serving others, we continue the very best traditions of the university.

Equity & Inclusion

We are a welcoming community, reflective of the diversity of the modern world and strengthened by our differences. We respect and support the needs and aspirations of our students, faculty, and staff by being creative, adaptable, and inclusive in our practice and policies.

Stewardship & Sustainability

We use sound assessment and careful planning to allocate resources to best meet the broader goals of the university. We are purposeful stewards of our resources.

Scope

The StFX Academic Plan (2022-2027) will:

- a) Present a distinct vision for academics at StFX, one that allows StFX to differentiate itself from comparator schools based on our academic environment. The Academic Plan will also identify a set of strategies for achieving that vision.
- b) Focus on the academic activities of the university: program offerings; teaching and learning; student academic supports; academic quality; equity, diversity, and inclusion; as well as other relevant issues that emerge through the exercise. (Research is addressed through the recent StFX Strategic Research and Creative Works Plan.)
- c) Build on the planning exercises that have taken place at StFX over the past five years, without duplicating that work (e.g. Strategic Enrolment Plan; Faculty-level strategic plans). The plan should also align with, though not duplicate, the planned update of university-wide strategic plan which will be taking place concurrently.
- d) Be informed by information about StFX's current position on relevant academic measures (e.g., recent enrolment patterns, NSSE scores). This benchmarking exercise will also include an analysis of what has been achieved since the current university-wide strategic plan has been in place.
- e) Present a clear set of objectives and specific goals that will support each of those objectives. When appropriate, the goals will be measurable.
- f) Be informed by extensive consultation within the StFX community, as well as by research on best practice in higher education. The consultation process should include intentional outreach to groups including individual Faculties, university committees (e.g., General Faculty, Quality of Life), and offices that support the student academic experience (e.g., Tramble Centre, Diversity Offices).
- g) Present a strategy that is sustainable. As such, the plan should encourage initiatives that enable cooperation and collaboration across the university.
- h) Include a mechanism for ongoing assessment during the implementation phase, as well mechanisms that support innovation during the life of the plan.

Proposed Timeline

- **January 2021:** APP presents Terms of Reference & Timeline to Senate
- **February – mid-May 2021:** APP prepares for consultation (e.g., research, draft discussion document, consultation plan)
- **Mid-May – July 2021:** First phase of community consultation.
- **August - September 2021:** Consolidation of feedback; preparation of preliminary draft.
- **October - November 2021:** Second phase of consultation. APP brings draft Academic Plan to community for feedback, including discussion at Senate and other committees, as appropriate.
- **December – January 2022:** Feedback integrated into final version
- **February 2022:** APP approves the Academic Plan
- **March 2022:** Academic Plan presented to Senate for final approval