

StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan:
Cultivating a Flourishing Campus

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that St. Francis Xavier University is located on the unceded and traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw, who have maintained a connection to this land. We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the 'Treaties of Peace and Friendship' which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

We also acknowledge that these same lands include a history of exploiting enslaved African peoples whose labour was used for the profit of others, who were bought and sold as property, and who engaged in widespread resistance and protests to reclaim their freedom, dignity and humanity. Black Canadians, as well as African and Caribbean descendant peoples, are still considered 'outsiders' despite their extensive and important contributions to Canadian society. The legacies of anti-Black racism are evident today in various types of institutional exclusion and discrimination of the type that StFX must remedy.

We acknowledge that throughout Canadian history, immigrants from many ethnocultural groups have been victimized by various forms of racism, including legalized discrimination, lower pay, harsh working conditions, disenfranchisement, and internment. "Excluding unwanted immigrants is literally foundational to Canadian identity," writes Michael Fraiman¹, "while blatant xenophobia, through the decades, has been codified in law and policy at the expense of the Irish in 1847, the Chinese in 1885, the Sikhs in 1914, the Jews in 1939, the Japanese in the 1940s and the Haitians in 1973." Today, members of Muslim and Asian communities and other racialized people are among those most commonly subjected to prejudicial and exclusionary behaviour.

We recognize the ongoing discrimination and violence experienced by members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. There has been progress over the past twenty years in the legal landscape and in the evolution of social opinions and attitudes related to an individual's sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression. Nonetheless, members of the LGBTQIA+ community still suffer pernicious and blatant gender bias in all areas of public and private life, including housing, employment, opportunities in academic settings, in the ability to buy goods and services, and in the opportunities to participate meaningfully in our society's decision making processes.

And we acknowledge that persons with disabilities still face barriers to accessibility. These barriers may be attitudinal, organizational or systemic, architectural or physical, or within the design of information, communications, and technology systems. The ability of persons with disabilities to achieve their educational goals and reach their full potential in their chosen fields is not simply an idea – it is a human right. We acknowledge the need to make substantive change to ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunities to reach their full potential through post-secondary education.

¹ [The long history of 'go back to where you came from' in Canada](#), Maclean's, August 2, 2019

Regardless of their race, ethnic background, ancestry or religion, ability or sexual orientation we recognize and value the right of all StFX students, faculty and staff to pursue their studies, scholarship and work in an equitable, inclusive and accessible environment.

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Our Story

The student experience at StFX University is comprised of individual stories that shape what we believe about the university's purpose and impact. The mission to foster equitable learning environments in which all students can flourish represents an important motivation, but its intentions cannot outweigh the importance of understanding our place in broader student culture and experience.

This Plan has emerged in extraordinary times. As we continue to navigate the uncertainties of a global pandemic, we are acutely aware of the increasingly complex challenges in the day-to-day lives of our students. These challenges are portrayed in popular media, illustrated in research findings, and all too often, experienced first-hand.

To make the Student Experience story one about cultivating a flourishing campus, we can learn from storytelling to build empathy and shift culture. In order to create experiences that are student-centered, we must demonstrate our commitment to integrating research, theory, practice and assessment across all of the programs, resources, supports we provide. We must be committed to understanding the impact of our work on the lives and experiences of all students, and we must make the story we want to have told about us true in every action, communication, and relationship.

Culture & Vision

Understanding that the needs of students are varied, dynamic, and complex, this Plan takes a *whole campus approach* to cultivating a student culture and experience that supports *all students flourishing*.

Our students are drawn to StFX because of the potential to be socially engaged and find belonging in a strong community of people who share common values and interests. We can leverage these strengths. However, we also recognize that the living and learning environment has unique challenges and dynamics that can impact wholistic student success and well-being. We must address the aspects of our culture if we are to create the conditions under which all students can flourish.

Culture is built from shared stories, and while we can control some of the inputs into the existing culture, we cannot control the outputs. The subjective nature of storytelling means that each individual lens that adopts our story also irrevocably changes it. Since stories are not static, we can show that culture is likewise fluid. By applying ongoing and consistent assessments we can better understand the culture around us and support positive change within it.

Our vision is for all Xaverians to discover their personalized pathway through StFX's rich, wholistic learning environment; engage in courageous conversations with our diverse community on and off campus; and, develop the skills to *flourish* throughout their degree and after graduation.

Our vision for the future is achievable through strong relationships with students, staff, faculty, and community members that can actively shape the stories told within the institutional culture. By working collaboratively with students and other partners as co-creators of the student culture and experience, we will shape the ongoing implementation of this strategic plan.

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Section 1: Our Approach

At StFX, we recognize that the learning experiences and well-being of students is significantly impacted by interrelated physical, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, political and contextual factors (Silverman, Underhile, & Keeling, 2008). StFX is committed to providing space for all students to develop skills and promote learning. To do that well, we must adopt a Plan that not only responds to individual concerns but also makes wholistic student success and well-being a priority in all that we do.

Our vision of the StFX Student Experience is an institutional environment of people, places and spaces that **empower all students flourishing**. We live this vision by building understanding, capacity and connection. We integrate research, theory, practice and continuous improvement across all of the programs, resources, and supports we provide.

All programs, resources and supports provided by StFX Student Services will be intentionally designed and grounded in the following evidence-informed frameworks to support wholistic student success and well-being:

- Cultivate a Flourishing Campus
- Support Mental Health as a Continuum
- Recognize and Respond to Social Determinants of Health
- Promote Agency through Wholistic Student Engagement
- Harness a Developmental and Proactive Approach

1.1 Cultivate a Flourishing Campus

The concept of flourishing builds upon the work of Corey Keyes and Jon Haidt (2003) to offer a new vision for wholistic student success and a tangible and concrete framework through which to achieve this vision. Keyes and Haidt's work highlighted emotional, psychological, and social well-being as foundational to those who live healthy, productive, joyful, and flourishing lives.

Contemporary research and practice in student affairs that undertakes the creation of programs and supports for students using a flourishing framework reconsiders the environments that students are learning within, offering a critical lens to the places, pedagogies, and policies that engage – or disengage – (groups of) students. This includes ensuring programming meets the diverse needs of students and intentionally cultivates spaces of belonging that reflect the diversity and multidimensionality of students. This approach reframes historical narratives of blame that have contributed to the “achievement gap” experienced by some populations of students by harnessing the diverse set of strengths that each student brings to their own learning process. This approach empowers and supports students to discover and apply their strengths to their personal development processes, so that they are engaged in their learning, becoming flourishing members of their community.

1.2 Address Mental Health as a Continuum

At StFX we recognize the spectrum of all mental and physical health concerns that may affect people during their lives. Our preferred continuum model moves from healthy adaptive coping (green) to mild and self-limiting distress or functional impairment (yellow) to more severe, persistent injury or impairment (orange) and clinical illnesses and disorders that require more concentrated medical care (red).

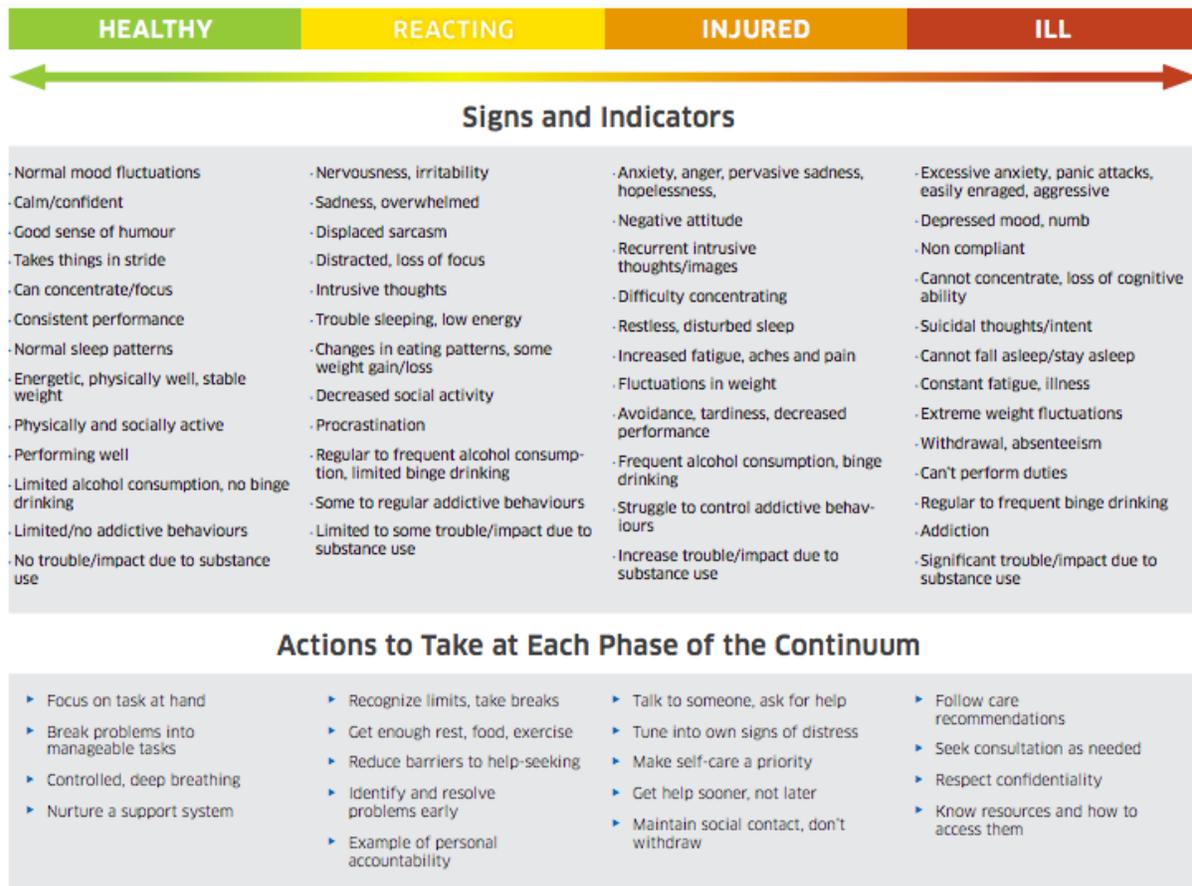


Figure 1: Mental Health Continuum (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2017)

The arrow along the four colour blocks indicates health is a continuum and the state of one's health can move back and forth. Mental wellness is not static. Many people have physical and mental health concerns that – when identified and treated early – can be temporary and reversible. Even if injured or ill, it is possible to return to healthy and achieve a high level of functioning if the right supports and environment surrounds them.

Finally, using a mental health continuum model prevents the use of stigmatizing labels. We are all on the continuum and how we move along is influenced by many factors. Mental health and mental illness are reflected in how we think, feel, and act as we react to, and cope, with life.

1.3 Recognize and Respond to Social Determinants of Health

Building on the social determinants of health², our approach to supporting wholistic student success and well-being is one that recognizes intersectionality – the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, ableism and classism) combine, overlap or intersect, especially in the experiences of historically-excluded individuals and groups.

We acknowledge the work that needs to be done to break down the societal, university and divisional/systemic structures, systems, attitudes, and actions that have oppressed marginalized, and excluded many members of our university and society. Breaking down structures involves acknowledging the truth of our histories and current context, and then identifying, addressing and adapting our work in ways that challenge colonial and oppressive structures and discrimination, and proactively engages and creates opportunities for members from communities who have been affected by systemic exclusion – including (and recognizing intersectionality) Indigenous, Black, minoritized, 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, and students with disabilities.

StFX is committed to ensuring that our programs, supports, and services are grounded in culturally competent, anti-oppressive and trauma-informed approaches that acknowledge the impacts of historical and ongoing oppression in historically excluded communities. We must continue to inquire, listen, and learn so that our actions are informed by our communities.

1.4 Promote Agency through Wholistic Student Engagement

Ultimately, our goal *is to cultivate a whole campus approach to all students flourishing*. We understand that to achieve this goal, we need to proactively broaden and coordinate programs and resources that promote wholistic student engagement. Through our work, we will support all students in achieving their current and lifelong academic, personal and career goals, which depending on the focus, includes undergraduate and graduate students; part-time and full-time students; mature students; students with family responsibilities; international and domestic students.

With students at the centre of our work, we understand that learning can be intentionally programmed across all of the places where students engage at StFX. By defining shared institutional learning goals and scaffolding intentional learning experiences across the student lifecycle, we will measure the gains in knowledge, transferrable skills, and personal values through our continuous assessment cycle. Building on research dedicated to understanding those critical features of a university experience that allow all students to flourish, we will strengthen student living and learning at StFX, focusing the learning outcomes of the programs, resources, and supports we create and deliver as an institution.

² The Public Health Agency of Canada describes the social determinants of health as income, social status, social support networks, education, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, gender and culture.

1.5 Harness a Developmental and Proactive Approach

We recognize that student needs change throughout the university experience. By initiating early and frequent connections with students, StFX can support student transition and persistence, especially among students from historically excluded groups.

The importance of facilitated and guided transitions – entering the university and through until graduation – can build student capacity to flourish and succeed. The student lifecycle must be considered as the transitioning in and transitioning through and transitioning out stages, highlighting the importance of focusing on the first-year experience and intentionally scaffolding student learning goals through all years of study.

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Section 2: Our Vision

What is a Whole Campus Approach?

Well-being is created through the experiences of our everyday lives, and is influenced by diverse stakeholders, many of whom are outside of the traditional health realm (World Health Organization, 2014).

StFX has an existing network of supports available to students for their personal health and wellness, academic guidance and success, career development, and overall student support. However, we realize that optimizing mental health for all students can only be achieved through a *wholistic approach* to mental health and a culture of wellness across our entire campus.

This work will start with strengthening mental health supports and primary care services within Student Services. We will cultivate student flourishing by providing evidence informed programs, resources, and supports that prioritize proactive and responsive care to foster individual and collective student well-being. Through a commitment to empathy and collaboration, our student-centered approach to wellness will apply an intersectional lens that is adaptive to the needs of individual students and the campus community.

We prioritize reducing wait times; streamlining service pathways and follow-up for students, faculty and staff; and improved communications around resources and services, including access to after-hours support. Using trauma-informed practices, we will strengthen our relational approach and create the conditions whereby students can discover their strengths and values allowing them to actively engage in their personal development and experience StFX as safe place where they can flourish.

Moreover, taking a whole campus approach is about the whole student, recognizing the powerful link between physical health, spiritual health, emotions, behaviour, social interaction, and student success. It is about recognizing that mental health and well-being can fluctuate, and the focus needs to be on *flourishing* at university, understanding that mental health and well-being is much more than the absence of illness.

In this respect, StFX recognizes that wholistic student success and well-being cannot be totally achieved through a focus on the delivery of mental health services and supports alone. Rather our campus community requires a whole campus approach with active leadership and ownership at all levels. Such a strategy also requires a high level of ongoing dialogue, a commitment to continuous improvement, strong community partnerships, professional development, and effective policies and procedures. This will ensure the future of StFX is one where wholistic student success and well-being is prioritized, understood, and embraced by all.

We will advance a whole campus approach to all students flourishing by building understanding, capacity and connection across the StFX community and build connections with the external community.

Build Understanding

- We will educate students, faculty and staff about mental health issues and barriers experienced by students and in particular by historically under represented groups to reduce stigma and create the motivation to engage in skill development and support change. We will ensure that StFX has a respectful, inclusive culture that reflects the values of our institution and the wellness needs of our communities.

Build Capacity

- We will create an environment where our focus on wholistic student success and well being is apparent in our priorities, policies, practices, and environment. We will strengthen programs, supports and services to support students in their well-being. We will create opportunities for skill development and having conversations about well-being. In doing so, we will create the conditions for those experiencing difficulty to seek and gain support before harm occurs.

Build Connection

- By leveraging internal and external partnerships—and ensuring ongoing communication and engagement—we will seek opportunities to create meaningful connections and improve access and opportunity for students while at the university and in their local communities.

StFX Principles

One way to enable culture change related to student success and well-being is to foster organizational development which demonstrates support and action. The following principles will ground our work and collectively guide our whole campus approach to all students flourishing.

Equitable

We draw on anti-oppression, anti-racism, and trauma-informed practices, as well as inclusive and universal design, to cultivate equity, access, inclusion and sense of belonging, through an intersectional lens. Taking a wholistic approach that addresses discrimination, inequities and social determinants of health are essential to build and support a culture of well-being at StFX.

Wholistic

We understand student well-being as a continuum of mental and physical health concerns that may affect people during their lives. We intentionally and proactively centre student well-being by considering the whole student's experience, highlighting culturally responsive and trauma-informed pathways to care, and building individual and institutional capacity to support wholistic student success and well-being.

Mental Health and Wellness

We will create work and learning environments grounded in respect and support, guided by a shared responsibility for equitable access and the mental health well-being of our faculty, staff, and students.

Integrated

Our work is supported by and in collaboration with our partners. With students at the centre, we work to evolve our programs, services and resources to meet their needs. Through partnerships, we support a rich, vibrant student experience.

Developmental

We support wholistic, strengths-based learning and development by providing opportunities for students to achieve their personal, academic and career goals, and instill passion and skills for continual exploration, learning and growth.

Learning Focused

We recognize student learning and development as a process that takes place during a student's entire university experience. By intentionally scaffolding student learning and

engagement, we provide opportunities and supports to help student learning and development through all programs and years of study.

Personalized

We acknowledge diversity in student lived experience and proactively respond to evolving student-centric needs in order to provide services, supports and experiences that are personalized and adaptive. We draw on assessment, data, research and consultation to improve our planning, processes and decision-making.

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Learning Goals

Our approach to strategic planning is marked by our commitment to understanding impact and outcomes of our work through the lens of student learning. That is, we fundamentally believe that learning can be intentionally programmed across all of the spaces and places that students engage in at StFX. This intentionally planned learning must be accompanied by articulated learning outcomes that allow us to measure and understand what students are learning, and how this learning has allowed them to *do, value* or *come to know* new and critical knowledge, transferrable skills, and personal values that will be used to drive their future careers and lives.

Our Whole Campus Approach is based on a framework of equitable student flourishing. Research identifies five key factors post-secondary administrators and educators can foster by maximizing the academic, interpersonal and intrapersonal development of students. These five factors are positive perspective (optimism about the future), academic determination (investment of effort to reach educational goals), engaged learning (engagement in the process of learning), social connectedness (healthy connection to others) and diverse citizenship (commitment to making a difference in the world (Schreiner, Louis and Nelson, 2020).

We know from a substantial body of literature, that students who flourish do better in all areas of their lives: they have enriched careers; they have deeper and more meaningful connections with peers, colleagues and community; they go on to make more meaningful contributions in both community and career; and they have more agility in the way in which they respond to setbacks, learning to become courageous in the face of discomfort, without fear of failure.

By taking a whole campus approach, StFX has the opportunity to intentionally support wholistic student success and well-being across all factors of flourishing. This will include focusing on several critical areas of intervention, including: our institutional structures; proactive mental health education and awareness; capacity to monitor and respond to early indicators of student concern; mental health services; and crisis management.

By integrating shared learning goals across all of our units we can ensure that when students engage with our programming, across all of our departments, they will be empowered to *discover* their *personalized pathway* through StFX's immersive learning environment; *engage* in courageous conversations with our diverse community on campus and off-campus; and develop the knowledge and skills to *flourish*.

Our Learning Goals provide the strategic and theoretical lens through which students will do, value or come to know new and critical knowledge, transferrable skills and personal values that will become critical drivers in their future careers and lives. This palette will guide truly unique, learner-centric experiences that position students to navigate an unpredictable, possibility-filled world with confidence.

To achieve these goals, we can intentionally map our shared learning goals to the five factors of flourishing. We have also based the development of these shared learning goals on complementary, but distinctive competencies, including [Seven Sacred Teachings](#), Ubuntu, and Nguzo Saba.

Throughout our collective work, we seek to cultivate Xaverians who are distinguished by the following characteristics:

Learning Goal	<i>Characteristics</i>
Critical Thinkers	<i>Students who are curious, engaged and reflective.</i>
Future-Focused Planners	<i>Students who are goal-oriented, motivated and self-directed.</i>
Adaptable Problem-Solvers	<i>Students who are hopeful, self-determined, resourceful & creative.</i>
Community-Minded	<i>Students who are relational, empathetic, collaborative & self-aware.</i>
Engaged Citizens	<i>Students who are equitable, globally aware and socially responsible.</i>
Innovative Leaders	<i>Students who exhibit integrity, judgement & intercultural competency.</i>

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Section 3: Guiding Models

Over the last few years, there has been increasing attention paid to the challenges of student mental health, and the best ways to operationally address these challenges. Major initiatives and reports have been launched by key post-secondary groups (such as the Association of University and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), Association of Canadian University Colleges (ACCC); and, Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS), and there has been considerable interest in the academic literature as well.

In October 2020, the Mental Health Commission of Canada released the [National Standard for Mental Health and Well-being for Post-Secondary Students](#). The Standard calls on post-secondary institutions to recognize how post-secondary environments can promote or detract optimal student mental health, raise awareness about mental health and decrease mental illness-related stigma, provide healthier and safer institutional environments, and improve opportunities for student success and flourishing. This section outlines some of the key models that are driving a comprehensive, whole campus approach to supporting wholistic student success and well-being at StFX.

Mental Health Continuum

Wholistic student success and well-being is a combination of physical, social, and mental well-being, and not simply the absence of disease (World Health Organization). Mental health and mental illness, although related, can be conceptualized along different continua. Keyes' model emphasizes that mental health and mental illness occur on separate continua, such that an individual without a diagnosed mental illness can still experience fluctuations in their mental health (Keyes, 2007). Likewise, mental illnesses can be experienced in various levels of severity. People living with mental illnesses can still have good mental health, if the right environmental conditions and supports are in place.

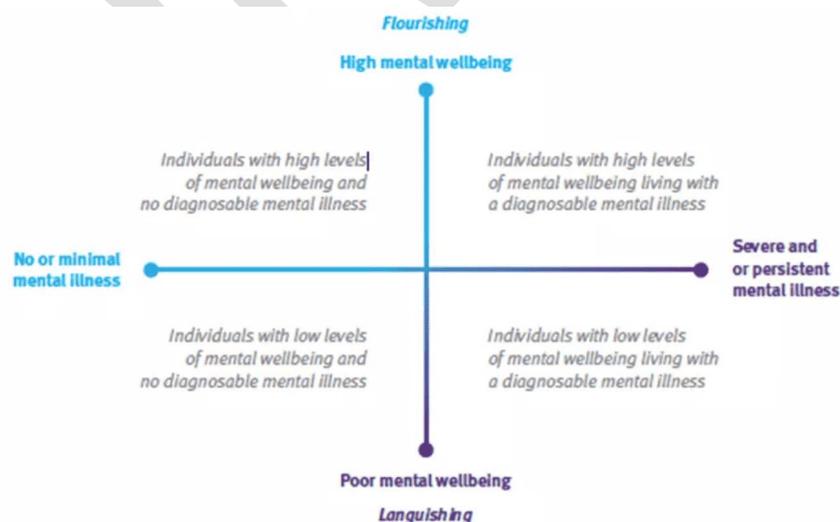


Figure 2: MacKean, 2011. Adapted from: The Health Communication Unit at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario; based on the conceptual work of Corey Keyes

At StFX, we understand that mental well-being exists on a spectrum, or continuum, and that the state of one’s health can move back and forth. This means that we need to integrate effective **upstream, midstream and downstream** approaches to support wholistic student success and well-being.

Applying the Mental Health Continuum to develop comprehensive framework of programs, supports and services will allow StFX to strategically identify and address priorities on campus: education and awareness programming, promoting an ethos of support; dedication to up-to-date policies and procedures; and working broadly with campus and community partners to enhance impact and efficacy.

Intensity	Health Promotion	Low Intensity	Medium Intensity	High Intensity	Severe Illness
	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Programs and Services	Health Promotion Prevention Education Resilience Self-Help	Guided Self-Help Self-Management Skills-Building Coping Access to Counselling	Skills-Building Counselling Group Therapy Psychotherapy Primary Care	Medical Treatment Interim Outpatient Psychiatric Treatment Case Management Specialist Supports	Interim Outpatient Psychiatric Care Crisis Management Case Management Hospital/Community Care
	- University Websites - Online Transitions Modules - Prevention Programs - Knowledge Keeper - Extended Orientation Programming - Self-Directed, Online Resources (ex. TAO Self-Help)	-Outreach Programs (Flourish@X, Visible@X) -Expert-led Advising - Knowledge Keeper - Developmental Mentorship (RLCs, DEC) - Expert-led Workshops - Primary Care - Hotline Access (ex. Good2Talk)	-Coping Skills Workshops -Wellness Workshops -Group Counselling -Short-Term Counselling -Culturally-Relevant Counselling -Case Management -Primary Care	-Short-term counselling -Case Management -On-Call Assessment -Sexual Assault Care -Culturally-Relevant Counselling -Private Therapy -Hotline Access (ex. Good2Talk)	-Case Management -Crisis Management -On-Call Assessment -Hospital Admission -Hotline Access (ex. Good2Talk)

Figure 3: Mental Health Continuum, including Programs and Services available at StFX University.

Multi-Level Framework

Given the breadth of factors that impact mental wellness, concerns about student mental health and well-being cannot be effectively addressed through a focus on the delivery of mental health services and programs alone. The StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan takes a much broader approach that requires participation at individual, departmental and institutional levels, as well as the need to look beyond the University to community partners to connect students with appropriate programs, supports and services.

Models of prevention and intervention such as the *Campus Population Health Promotion Model* (ACCC 2008), *NASPA Health Education and Leadership Program’s ecological approach* (NASPA 2004), and the *Health Promoting Universities report* (World Health Organization, 1998) are based on a number of key assumptions including the interrelatedness of health, learning and campus structure/culture;

interdependence of social, emotional, physical, spiritual health and learning; and the importance of collective support and campus-wide involvement in creating a campus environment that is conducive to student mental health and academic success.

The key to the multilevel framework is that it recognizes the broader context for well-being that individuals exist in (such as group interactions, the stigma of mental health issues, campus social environment and institutional policies) and helps to identify initiatives at the group, campus and community society level that can affect mental health challenges.

By reframing our understanding of student support and well-being as part of a comprehensive *whole campus approach*, we will be better able to appreciate the diverse ways in which our institutional structures interact, as part of a collective and complex system, leading to more wholistic and effective interventions. Further, by looking more broadly at these issues, interventions can be focused on initiatives that can reduce the potential incidence or severity of mental health issues, facilitating more proactive approaches to addressing the factors that can affect student mental health and well-being.

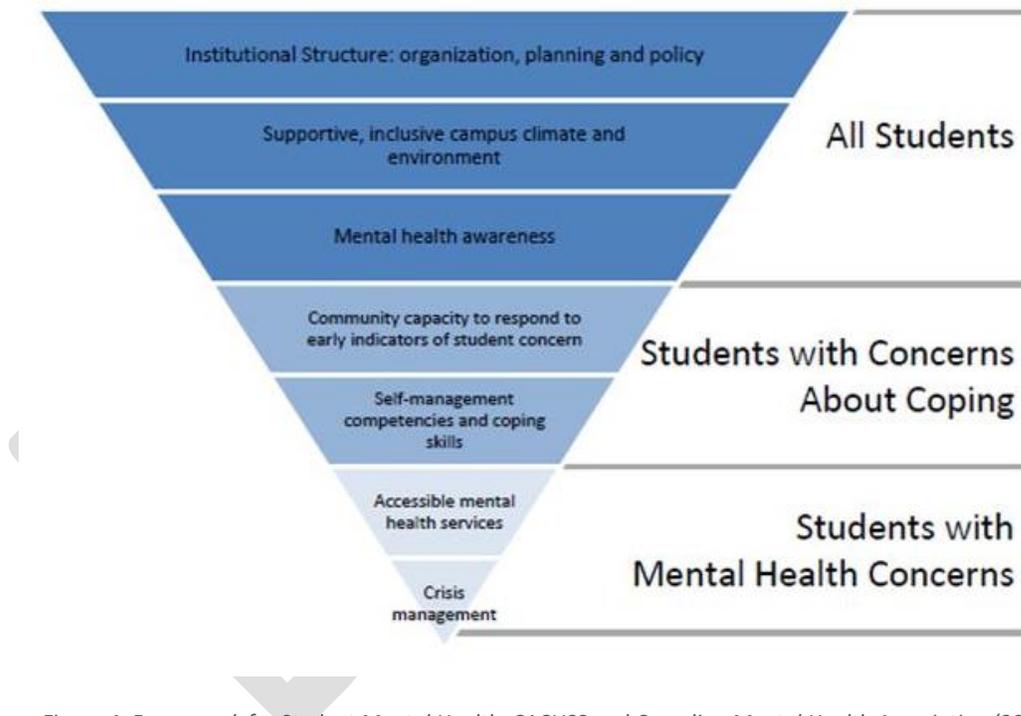


Figure 4: Framework for Student Mental Health, CACUSS and Canadian Mental Health Association (2013).

Continuum of Care Model

A systemic response requires not just that there are multiple levels and types of initiatives, but that they are working in coordination and cooperation as part of a multi-tiered, integrated support model (or continuum of care). A strategic framework can provide a guide to a systemic response, but it requires ownership and leadership at all levels of the institution for a systemic response to be effective.

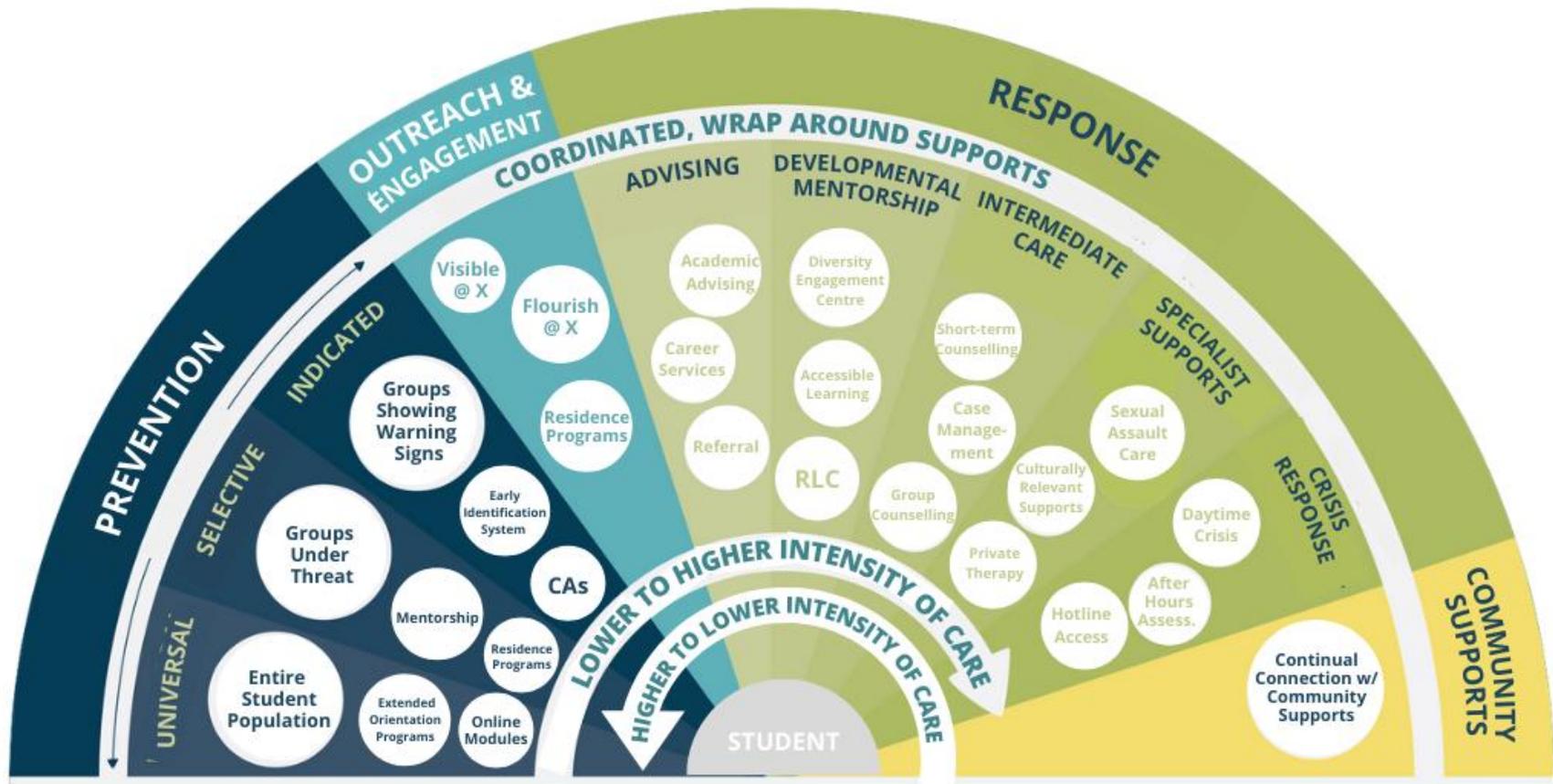


Figure 5: StFX Continuum of Care Model

Section 4: Strategic Initiatives

A critical objective of the StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan is the development of three strategic frameworks that will allow our portfolio to adopt a dynamic integrated student learning paradigm. The three strategic frameworks are: *Mental Health and Well-being Framework*, *Experiential and Co-Curricular Learning Framework*, *First-Year Experience Framework*.

Because of their overarching themes, each strategic framework will adopt a *whole campus approach*. Within these frameworks, student learning will permeate the boundaries of the classroom and will be deepened through all of the programs, resources, and supports we provide. The development of the strategic frameworks will be ongoing and collaborative. Collectively, they will be necessary to support the development and implementation of the recommendations that have emerged through our strategic planning process.

Implementation of all the frameworks will take time and will require collaboration with campus-wide stakeholders. In order to make immediate progress towards achieving several recommendations, StFX Student Services is committed to achieving the following initiatives by 2030. Achieving these initiatives will help to ensure that StFX is on track to deliver upon the priorities outlined in the Student Experience and Opportunity Plan (see Appendix A for a complete summary).

1. Develop an Integrated Mentorship Program
 - Advance Peer Mentorship, Employment, and Training
 - Facilitate Mentoring Networks for Students from Historically Excluded Groups
 - Diversify Student Coaching and Mentorship Opportunities
2. Create an Extended Student Orientation and Transitions Program
 - Focus on the New Student Experience
 - Deliver Comprehensive Orientation Programming for All Students
 - Develop a Digital Student Experience
3. Strengthen Mental Health Supports
 - Advance Prevention Education and Awareness
 - Provide Culturally Relevant, Trauma-Informed Services
 - Formalize, Coordinated Wrap Around Supports
4. Engage All Students in Meaningful Experiential Learning
 - Expand Intentional Experiential Learning and Employment Opportunities
 - Create a Student Experience Catalogue/Co-Curricular Record
 - Enhance Relationships Between Students and Broader Community
5. Radically Welcome and Engage Students from Historically Excluded Group
 - Foster a Positive Campus Climate for All Students

- Leverage Universal Design to Create Accessible Opportunities and Spaces
- Partner to Improve Access to Personal Development and Career Opportunities

6. Enrich the Residence Experience

- Modernize the Professional Service Model to Support Student Transition and Success
- Provide Focused, Consistent, and Supportive Programming
- Strengthen Accountability for Residence Operations and Functions

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4.1 Develop an Integrated Mentorship Model

Goal

Develop an integrated mentorship model to cultivate meaningful connections and enable all students to discover their strengths and personalized pathways to success.

Strategic Initiatives

4.1.1 Advance Peer Mentorship, Employment, and Training

We believe in the transformative power of mentoring relationships and want all students to have access to high-quality mentoring experiences. With the development of an integrated mentorship program, mentoring relationships will begin as students transition into StFX and have the opportunity to continue throughout their university experience.

Through engagement with a diverse network of mentors — including peers, staff, faculty, alumni and community members — students will be supported in the process of setting long-term academic and career goals; preparing for potential obstacles; and connecting to on-campus resources, including financial aid, mental health services and academic supports. This approach will empower students to discover and apply their strengths to their academic and personal development so that they are engaged in their learning and become flourishing members of their community. To support this initiative, we will:

- Build capacity for the Residence Life Leadership Team to frontload developmental mentorship in support of first-year transition and student success through intentional leadership development and training opportunities.

4.1.2 Facilitate Mentoring Networks for Students from Historically Excluded Groups

Recommendations from the President’s Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR) call on StFX to establish a transition year program to support student academic success (both pre-entrance and during first year) which should include formal (e.g., camps and courses) and informal supports (e.g., mentorship) to enhance assistance to students’ success.

Rather than relying on one person as a mentor, we will help students consider their needs and identify different people who might be able to guide them in each area. For example, a student may access mentors for research, another for career development and yet another for support in navigating academic culture. They may be professionals across the university and beyond, not just those housed within a students’ major, department or school. Having the opportunity to access multiple mentors will enable students to learn more broadly from people with different life and career experiences and manageably and meaningfully leverage the talents and experience of the caring individuals within the StFX and external community. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop a Peer Mentorship Program to support first-year students in building community connections, navigating post-secondary education and supporting academic success, with a focus on facilitating peer mentorship opportunities for students from historically excluded groups.
- Create group mentoring networks for students from historically excluded groups to come together in community, share experiences and explore academic, personal and career opportunities and pathways.
- Foster access to existing mentoring networks (i.e., X-Connects Alumni Mentorship Network)

4.1.3 Diversify Student Coaching and Mentorship Opportunities

Our work is grounded in the understanding that students come to their academic journey with a set of personalized strengths, and that our programs should support students as they discover and actualize these strengths and consider their futures. As a result, over the next five years, we will focus on diversifying professional coaching and mentorship opportunities that allow students to not only identify their strengths, but also recognize how these strengths can be leveraged as transferrable skills that map to their future career pathways and goals. By building capacity through our units and departments, we will also enable students to understand how their strengths have adapted, changed and can be applied to build a meaningful life and career. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop a mentor training and development program to increase mentor skills development, strengths-based coaching, equity and inclusion and promote positive and enriching mentor-mentee relationships.
- Promote broad mentorship networks with StFX faculty, alumni and Career Services to ensure all StFX students have opportunities to seek career mentors from a diverse network.
- Expand our current mentorship networks with increased opportunities for students to gain professional experiences both at StFX and within Nova Scotia.

4.2 Create an Extended Orientation and Transitions Program

Goal

Create an Extended Orientation and Transitions program by frontloading resources, supports and programs in first year and intentionally scaffolding student learning and engagement as part of an immersive first-year learning experience.

Strategic Initiatives

4.2.1 Focus on the New Student Experience

Over the next five years StFX will establish a comprehensive and coordinated new student experience that is distinguished by its commitment to ensuring that all new students are supported throughout their student lifecycle, that is from the time a student becomes a prospect, moving to and applicant, and finally, to building a plan for their successful transition into and throughout their first year.

By intentionally designing a comprehensive new student experience framework, we will be better able to support students as they transition into StFX by providing purposeful and wholistic co-curricular learning experiences that extend throughout the entire first year experience. Through careful design and collaboration with our campus partners, we will also be able to better articulate at what point in the student lifecycle the Student Services portfolio leads in programming, and at what point in the student lifecycle we act as supporters of, and collaborators with, our campus partners (particularly academic and enrollment services). To support this initiative, we will:

- Create a New Student Experience Framework that maps intentional co-curricular student engagement and learning opportunities throughout the entire first-year experience.
- Develop and deliver an evidence-informed Orientation Week program, based in student flourishing. Identify and remove barriers to participation in Orientation Week.
- Provide proactive programming and experiential initiatives that support harm reduction approaches to substance use and provide healthy alternatives to socializing.
- Develop online modules for parents/supporters to be empowered to support their student in their transition to university and throughout their first-year experience.
- Establish a transition year program to support student success (both pre-entrance and during first year), including formal (e.g., camps and courses) and informal supports (e.g., mentorship). Areas of focus will include the development of a Summer Bridge Program focused on academic orientation, community connection, strengths assessment, and connection to local communities.

4.2.2 Deliver Comprehensive Orientation Programming for All Students

Our vision for this programming includes, for example, the design of comprehensive and integrated transitions programming for off-campus, mature, transfer, distance learning students and student

athletes, as well as other opportunities for non-traditional learners to deepen their engagement across a diverse set of dedicated co-curricular engagement opportunities. Fostering meaningful connections will require a particular focus on supporting off-campus students in their ability to build connections with members of the campus community and reviewing programming and supports available for mature and transfer students to facilitate stronger integration into the Orientation Program.

Programs, resources, and supports will be intentionally designed and developed based on best practices and cutting-edge evidence, research and internal data in order to support students across their learning journey. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop high-quality co-curricular learning experiences and transitions programming for off-campus, mature, distance learning, transfer students and student athletes that enrich their student experience.
- Coordinate a Winter transitions program to welcome new students arriving in January, and re-orient all first-year students to the programs, services and supports provided by StFX.
- Continue partnership between StFX Student Services and Graduate Studies to enhance understanding of the specific needs of graduate and distance learning students and deepen an understanding of their transitional needs.

4.2.3 Develop Digital Student Experience

We will expand opportunities for students to *discover* their personalized pathway through StFX's rich learning environment, *engage* with our diverse community on and off campus; and develop the skills they need to *flourish* by developing a digital Student Experience strategy that supports the creation of innovative digitally delivered student programming. We will create spaces for StFX students to share their learning stories and life experiences so that peers can celebrate, engage and educate each other. Through storytelling, we will strengthen and broaden the ways in which students can connect with one another and contribute to StFX's story. To support this initiative, we will:

- Leverage the "Being Xaverian" campaign as an opportunity to collect and share stories of diverse student experiences at StFX.
- Leverage the development of digital content and engagement to provide additional student employment opportunities, with priority for students from historically excluded groups.
- Create an online web platform for StFX students (undergraduate, graduate, full-time or part-time) to share their stories, guided by a content strategy based in student flourishing.

4.3 Strengthen Mental Health Supports

Goal

Support wholistic student success and well-being through the development of an integrated, multi-tier support model that promotes a philosophy of care which recognizes everyone within the StFX community has a role to play in supporting wholistic student success and well-being.

Strategic Initiatives

4.3.1 Enhance Prevention Education and Awareness

We recognize prevention education and early identification processes to be critical in cultivating a flourishing campus culture. We believe that students must have access to progressive, evidence-informed and strengths-based education opportunities in order to enhance their exploration of self and their relationships with the world around them.

With a commitment to transformative learning, we will develop strong partnerships with faculty and departments across campus to innovate our programming through evidence-based practices and cutting-edge research. We will build our capacity and structure to support and enable this engagement. We will start by focusing our partnerships on three areas: Student Mental Health and Wellness; Alcohol and Substance Use; and Residence Education. By championing wholistic student wellness and well-being, we can build a more supportive and inclusive campus community that empowers all students to achieve their full potential. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop strong partnerships with faculty and departments on campus to innovate our programming based on evidence-based practices and cutting-edge research.
- Create evidence informed frameworks that support our Residence Education programming, Alcohol and Substance Use Strategy and Mental Health & Wellness initiatives, ensuring that our programs are sensitive to diverse student experiences.
- Develop tools and resources to support administrative leaders, faculty, staff, and students in identifying signs and symptoms of distress or at-risk behaviours, and competencies in helping others by supporting those in need in accessing appropriate resources.
- Frontload transitional supports for all students that normalize help seeking behaviours (e.g., incorporate mental health and wellness, and campus supports and services within Orientation and Extended Orientation programming; build into graduate student orientations, varsity sport teams' training, etc.).

4.3.2 Provide Flexible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Supports

StFX recognizes barriers to mental health care access are created when we approach mental health care from a universal perspective. To decrease access barriers, we will create customized approaches to care

reflecting the needs of diverse student populations. By recognizing pre-existing, compounding social determinants of health and health inequalities in the lives of historically excluded students, we will implement responsive mental health care and preventative educational programs that are culturally respectful and trauma-informed, with the goal of increasing care access. To support this initiative, we will:

- Provide proactive and timely programs, services and resources that focus on the social determinants of health at all points along the mental health continuum (from mental well-being to urgent crisis). Make changes to how services are structured to match how students are accessing information and services. We prioritize reducing wait times; streamlining service pathways and follow-up for students, faculty and staff; and improved communications around resources and services.
- Review current policies, procedures, protocols and processes through an anti-racism and trauma-informed lens. Create more inclusive policies, processes and practices, where needed. New policies and procedures will include but will not be limited to: Return to Campus Following Hospitalization procedures, Accommodations Policy for Episodic and Non-Permanent Injury or Illness, and Employment Equity Policy.
- Draw on student-centered data and assessment to develop and adapt programs, services and resources to meet the needs of both specific and broad intersectional student identities, including Indigenous, Black, minoritized, 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, graduate students, mature students, and students with disabilities.

4.3.3 Formalize Coordinated, Wrap Around Supports

Our collaborative work in developmental mentorship is grounded in an understanding that students can grow from all of their experiences, including adverse experiences, and we support this belief through our advocacy, consultation, information and referral, and case management support. Through education of rights, responsibilities and policies, StFX students will be supported in navigating resources and making informed decisions, allow them to grow and ultimately learn through their experiences, in a safe and supportive environment. To support this initiative, we will:

- Identify and streamline pathways to care to support early identification, self-care, and help-seeking by putting students in contact with the appropriate resources at the appropriate time.
- Build capacity for Residence Life Leadership Team and Diversity Engagement Centre to apply developmental mentorship approach to early intervention and supporting student well-being.
- Implement a case management model to support “students of concern”. This may include students with mental illnesses or students who may be experiencing mental distress, who are in academic difficulty or may be heading toward or experiencing a crisis.
- Convene regular Students of Concern Committee meetings to formalize a coordinated, wrap around support model between faculty, academic units, and student services with systems and policies to facilitate communication and foster integrated and student-centric supports.
- Partner with Human Resources and others to ensure appropriate care and support are provided to student and professional staff who support student well-being. This includes front line

supports and in residence in times of crises, recognizing broad stressors that impact the community.

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4.4 Engage All Students in Meaningful Experiential Learning

Goal

Facilitate guided learning opportunities for all students that proactively advance common learning goals across living and learning environments and years of study. Cultivate agency by engaging students in the process of discovering their strengths and personalized pathways to success.

Strategic Initiatives

4.4.1 Expand Intentional Experiential Learning and Employment Opportunities

Working alongside various campus partners, we aim to re-envision Student Services relationships, strategies, and tools to guide students in integrating and making meaning of their experiences at StFX. We envision the development of strategies through enhancing our ability to leverage existing student employment, organizations, leadership, mentorship, and community development opportunities that aid in the development of these essential skills. We seek to increase access to these opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. This focus will encourage students to see experiential and co-curricular learning as an essential facet of their StFX education. We will accomplish this by frontloading intentional student learning and engagement opportunities and guiding students through intentional learning experiences through all programs and years of study. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop an integrated Experiential and Co-Curricular Learning framework to scaffold intentional student learning and engagement opportunities through all programs and years of study.
- Build clear structures, pathways and supports to more easily enable all students to engage through existing mechanisms such as Service Learning, McKenna Leadership programs, etc.
- Leverage mentorship to provide additional student employment opportunities, with priority for students from historically excluded groups.

4.4.2 Introduce a Student Experience Catalogue/Co-Curricular Record

Understanding what types of transferable skills students gain through engagement in curricular and co-curricular programming is essential when we think about preparing students for their future lives and careers. StFX Student Services will work collaboratively with campus and community partners to develop a digital Experiential Learning Catalogue/Co-Curricular Record (CCR). This will help students thoughtfully select experiential and co-curricular engagement opportunities, track their experiences, communicate the development of skills and reflect on their development in the areas of meaning and purpose.

Our catalogue will be anchored by our commitment to providing universally designed learning opportunities, programs and supports so that we are able to reach students where they are at, allowing them to discover their strengths, capitalizing on those as they move through their academic journey. By understanding the skills students want to gain, in relationship to the skills our industry and sector partners indicate are necessary in a rapidly changing and dynamic future work climate, we will prepare

students to be agile and responsive employees who possess a range of skills that can be adapted and implemented across a broad range of sectors. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop a digital Experiential Learning Catalogue/Co-Curricular Record (CCR) as a tool to help students thoughtfully select co-curricular engagement opportunities, integrate their campus experiences, communicate the development of skills, and reflect on their development in the areas of meaning and purpose.

4.4.3 Enhance Relationships between Students and Broader Community

Expanding opportunities for students to discover their personalized pathway through StFX's rich learning environment, engage with our diverse community on and off campus; and develop the skills they need to flourish by developing experiential and co-curricular learning opportunities that strengthen and broaden the ways in which students can connect with one another, learn through both curricular and co-curricular frameworks, and develop transferrable skills. Research also indicates that cultivating meaningful experiential and co-curricular learning to facilitate healthy community connections, and mitigate the prevalence and frequency of alcohol and substance use. To support this initiative, we will:

- Cultivate signature spaces and events on campus that engage alumni, the Antigonish community, students, faculty and staff in spirited and sanctioned events that inspire a sense of connection.
- Develop with our partners innovative and creative Experiential and Co-curricular learning Framework that allows students to gain a range of transferrable skills that allow them to be agile, adaptable and engaged members of their community.
- Strengthen off-campus student housing options, with a particular focus on facilitating off-campus accommodations for international students, in partnership with the Landlord's Association and Town of Antigonish. This could include support for initiatives such as education about tenant rights and responsibilities, promotion of off-campus housing options, income tax support, and At Home in Antigonish for the Holidays program.
- Strengthen capacity of on-campus and off-campus employers to create culturally-relevant, trauma-informed and supportive workplaces.

4.5 Radically Welcome and Engage Students from Historically Excluded Groups

Goal

Radically welcome students by advancing equitable access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed programs, resources and services for students from historically-excluded populations. Create opportunities for students to cultivate meaningful connections and sense of community.

Strategic Initiatives

4.5.1 Foster a Positive Campus Community for All Students

We recognize that StFX needs to lead equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility efforts from the scale of the institution, and the scales of individual and community, to make impacts through our collective work. Working across scale is the means by which, as a community, we will work to dismantle the structure barriers and systemic racism, discrimination, sexism and ableism that currently prevents the equity of many community members. It is together, through these combined actions, that will work will to create a flourishing campus that supports all students.

Fostering a positive campus climate for all students will promote positive relationships between students from different social and cultural backgrounds through established programming that aims to open up spaces to highlight, celebrate and actively engage with and learn from the diversity of our campus community, while ensuring that our programs are accessible to learners with diverse identities. To support this initiative, we will:

- Embed equity and accessibility in the development and execution of special student-facing events, and programming (Extended Orientation Programming, Homecoming, etc.) to be representative of diverse lived experiences and identities present in our university community.
- Create interactive/experiential training for all students. Content will be tailored for each role, with a consistent focus on teaching anti-racism and decolonization, anti-discrimination, cultural competency/safety, gender-based and sexual violence, equity and accessibility.
- Scaffold comprehensive training for students in leadership roles, varsity sport, learning abroad/exchange, etc. that they commit to, and enact, in their roles in our community.
- Streamline access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed supports and services available to students who have experienced acts of racism, harassment and/or discrimination. This will include reviewing policies, processes and procedures within StFX that may unintentionally discriminate, and revise policies to better enable equity, diversity and accessibility.

4.5.2 Leverage Universal Design to Create Accessible Opportunities and Spaces

The first principle of universal design (UD) is that interventions and recommendations stemming from this approach should increase the inclusion of all community members. When we plan for, and proactive think about, the most vulnerable and complex community members, we increase inclusion and sense of

belonging for all. StFX commits to working in partnership to increase supports, training and capacity to leverage Universal Design (UD) principles when designing, implementing and assessing co-curricular learning experiences, including: Experiential Learning Programs, Events and Programming, Policies and Processes, and Student Hiring and Recruitment Processes. To support this initiative, we will:

- Expand support model for students with disabilities (including temporary or episodic) to incorporate a *whole student approach* through mentoring, case management, outreach and engagement.
- Develop targeted co-curricular programming for students with disabilities, with a focus on university transition, career transition and self-determination.
- Maintain the Student Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide leadership opportunities for students with disabilities and ensure that their voices and lived experiences are reflected in program and service design, development and delivery.

4.5.3 Partner to Improve Access to Career Pathways

StFX is committed to pursuing partnerships that provide historically-excluded students with career opportunities and will seek to deepen existing connections. To support this initiative, we will:

- Provide and secure financial support and subject-matter expertise to establish meaningful career development programming
- Mobilize campus and community partners to inform and support initiatives such as mentoring programs, with a focus on mentorship for students from historically-excluded groups.
- Commit to equitable and inclusive recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention and offboarding practices that increase the diversity among our student staff complements, in particular representation from Indigenous, Black, minoritized communities and persons with disabilities.

StFX commits to learning from community partners about what transferrable skills students reduce to practice equity within different sections. We will embed these skills into our experiential and co-curricular learning experiences that that students' equity practice aligns with industry needs and projected future needs.

4.6 Enrich the Residence Experience

Goal

All students living in residence have access to resources, programs and initiatives that support meaningful and authentic campus connections, which build the foundation for their personal success and continued academic achievement.

Strategic Initiatives

4.6.1 Modernize the Professional Service Model to Support Student Transition and Success

We will provide tailored, comprehensive supports within inclusive spaces in which students become critically-engaged, self-determined learners. As a result of our work, students living in residence will **discover** and develop their strengths, **engage** in leadership and learning opportunities, and build the confidence and the competence they need to **flourish**.

Collectively, our professional staff and peer leaders will apply a strengths-based approach to their work, offering programs and supports for individuals and the entire residence community. In all of our interactions, we will focus on students' potential inside and outside the classroom, elevating their emotional well-being, and promoting self-awareness. Through our work we will strive to help students create a university experience that helps them flourish. To support this initiative, we will:

- Transition the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) position to live-in only roles, with an associated plan to grow infrastructure and improve policies to support the role.
- Build capacity for Residence Life Leadership Team to frontload developmental mentorship in support of first-year transition and student success through intentional leadership development and training opportunities.
- Create a Case Manager position to provide coordinated supports for students living in residence. For StFX, this will operationalize wrap-around supports for students in need by individuals who have knowledge of services on-campus and off-campus.

4.6.2 Provide Focused, Consistent and Supportive Programming

Residence education programming must be considered in the context of related initiatives concerning the development of an extended student orientation and transitions program. StFX's ability to effectively enhance residence programming through the creation of the phased approach to supporting programming in residences and defining how these various initiatives are integrated is essential. To support this initiative, we will:

- Update the Residence Education Model to ensure consistency in student learning and engagement across residences (i.e., safer socializing, bystander awareness, sexualized violence, diversity and inclusion, Being Xaverian).
- Frontload transitional support and education for first-year residence students by aligning the Residence Education Curriculum with the development and implementation of an Extended Orientation and Transitions Program.

4.6.3 Strengthen Accountability for Residence Operations and Functions

Supporting positive cultural development in residence is a critical aspect of cultivating a flourishing campus. It stands to reason then that the key roles in residence life staffing that directly impact how culture is developed. Community Advisors, House Councils and RLCs require a strong operational foundation because this will ground the student experience.

Our collaborative work is grounded in an understanding that by living in residence, students will learn a range of skills through the programs, supports and services that our team provides. Through education of rights, responsibilities and StFX policies students will be supported in navigating resources and making informed decisions, allowing them to grow and ultimately learn in a safe and supportive environment. To support this initiative, we will:

- Develop Residence Community Living Standards and adopt additional formalized assessment measures within residence to monitor performance.
- Review and update the Residence Code of Conduct to create a safe residence environment and empowers all students to become responsible citizens.
- Address remaining role clarity issues that influence positive culture development through targeted enhancements of key staff positions and by shifting House Council governance.

Section 5: Understanding Our Impact. Telling Our Story.

Understanding and evaluating impact is most successful when using many ways of knowing. For this reason, StFX has made the intentional decision to take a mixed methods approach to how we measure, monitor and analyze the impact of our programs and strategic initiatives.

5.1 Overview of Continuous Improvement and Assessment Plan

By understanding that learning is: (1) a continuous process and (2) intentionally designed to occur through our immersive learning environment, we will capture data at critical times during the student lifecycle at StFX. This will allow us to create agile and responsive programming that meets the needs of students and allow us to better align the transferrable skills intentionally embedded across our programs, supports and services.

We have designed a Continuous Improvement Plan, that utilizes an assessment cycle and external program evaluation cycle that work on 3 (assessment) and 6 (external program evaluation) year time frames. The data gathered through both our assessment and external evaluation cycles will allow us to understand how our programs, resources and supports are leading students to achieve the learning outcomes we have mapped to all of our programming. We will also be able to monitor and evaluate what types of transferrable skills students are gaining and how these are correlated to their achievement of our defined learning outcomes.

Three-Year Assessment Cycle

The development of a three-year assessment cycle to inform the continuous assessment of all programs, resources and supports. By 2027, we will have assessed our signature programs and have continuous data about their effectiveness and impact on StFX students.

Six-Year External Evaluation Cycle

The implementation of a six-year external review cycle for all departments in Student Services using national/international standards to advance and innovate departmental operations. These developmental reviews will follow international standards, established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and the National Standard for Mental Health and Well-being for Post-Secondary Students. These standards will allow us to evaluate our departments using externally validated measures, and external review committees. These evaluations will be both internally and externally driven, increasing the robust data that we will acquire. The results of these evaluations will be used to innovate our programming and adjust when necessary, allow us to remain agile and proactive.

Three-Year Benchmarking Cycle

The identification and participation in key national/international benchmarking studies on a regular reporting cycle will allow us to track our relative process against peer institutions, in key areas including campus climate, sexual violence, health and wellness, student engagement and student success and well-being.

The **Canadian Campus Wellness Survey (CCWS)** is a Canadian Assessment Tool to help colleges and universities collect the data they need to support student health and well-being. CCWS helps post-secondary institutions better assess student health and well-being on campuses, identify priorities for intervention, and increase capacity to link research with policy and practice.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides educators with an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending university. The survey asks students to report how much time and effort they give to empirically confirmed practices in undergraduate education. StFX participates in NSSE every three years, with the most recent data from 2020

Canadian Post-Secondary Alcohol and Drug Survey (CPADS) contributes to Health Canada's substance use surveillance strategy, which provides the Government of Canada with vital information on the use of drugs and other substances by Canadians. Surveys like the CPADS provide governments and non-governmental organizations, including StFX, with valuable information that can inform policies and programs that support students' health and wellbeing.

The **EAB Campus Climate Survey** assesses students' perceptions of and experiences with diversity and inclusion and campus sexual violence. This is an essential benchmarking survey which will allow our portfolio to better understand if our collective efforts to produce programs and supports to utilize an intersectional lens have worked to shift StFX's student experience to be one shaped by equity and diversity.

5.2 Overview of Benchmarking

Following best practices in the field of Student Affairs, we will utilize benchmarking to understand how our programs, resources and supports are shaping the dynamics of students at StFX. These studies will allow us to understand how our programs are impacting the institution over time, and at the scale of the institution. Benchmarking studies are most powerful when paired with more nuanced evaluation processes such as Continuous Improvement and Assessment because we can drill down into specific sub-populations and programs to understand if the impacts that we are seeing at the institutional level are correlated with programmatic level data. Benchmarking studies also allow us to compare StFX to similar institutions, both nationally and provincially.

5.3 Overview of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Within the StFX Student Services portfolio, we will set and use KPIs at the department level as a measurement tool to ensure that:

- 1) The work of each department is connected to the strategic goals of the StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan
- 2) There is connection between the operations of each unit (within each department) to the strategic goals of the StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan
- 3) The goals and vision of the departments are tracked and most importantly achieved.

Cumulatively, the KPIs are one tool that allow us to understand and measure the collective success of our efforts. We will use the following KPIs in order to understand the impacts we are making through our strategic initiatives:

Strategic Initiative	Sample KPIs
Develop an Integrated Mentorship Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of mentors participating in the program • Number of mentees participating in the program • Rate of participant satisfaction • Number of communications exchanged between mentors and mentees
Create an Extended Orientation and Transitions Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at StFX Orientation Week • Attendance at StFX Extended Orientation Programs and Events • Number of parents/supporters participating • Number of applicants for student leadership positions/orientation positions
Formalize Coordinated, Wrap Around Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait time from triage to first appointment at Health and Counselling Centre • Number of times a student is referred by other university departments • Number of visits for physical health vs mental health concerns • Percentage of time seeing unique vs. Recurring student • Amount of time between referral and touch point to a case manager • Number of unique educational presentations vs. pre-made educational presentations
Provide All Students with Meaningful Experiential Learning Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of undergraduate students engaged in an experiential learning opportunity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of campus partners who support and co-create undergraduate experiential learning opportunities. • Number of graduate students who are engaged in experiential graduate life programming • Number of partners who support and co-create experiential graduate life programming • Number of students who participate in community-based volunteer opportunities. • Number of students participating in community based student Internship and Work Integrated Learning opportunities. • Number of students who participate in sanctioned spirited activities (Sporting Events, StFX Sanctioned Social Events)
<p>Radically Welcome and Engage Students from Historically-Excluded Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of faculty, staff, students who engage in EDI programming each year • Percentage of signature EDI programs that are designed with learning outcomes and an embedded assessment plan

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Appendix A: Summary of Strategic Initiatives

Priority	Sample Initiatives
1. Develop an Integrated Mentorship Program	
Develop an Integrated Mentorship Model to cultivate meaningful connections and enable all students to discover their strengths and personalized pathways to success.	Build capacity for Residence Life Leadership Team to frontload developmental mentorship in support of first-year transition and student success through intentional leadership development and training opportunities (Build Capacity)
	Develop a Peer Mentorship Program to support first-year students in building community connections, navigating post-secondary education and supporting academic success, with a focus on facilitating peer mentorship opportunities for students from historically excluded groups (Build Understanding).
	Create group mentoring networks for students from historically excluded groups to come together in community, share experiences and explore academic, personal and career opportunities and pathways (Build Connection).
	Develop a mentor training and development program to increase mentor skills development, strengths-based coaching, equity and inclusion and promote positive and enriching mentor-mentee relationships (Build Understanding).
	Promote broad mentorship networks with StFX faculty, alumni and Career Services to ensure all StFX students have opportunities to seek career mentors from a diverse network (Build Connection).
	Expand our current mentorship networks with increased opportunities for students to gain professional experiences both at StFX and within Nova Scotia (Build Capacity).
2. Create an Extended Orientation and Transitions Program	
Create an Extended Orientation and Transitions program by frontloading resources, supports and programs in first year and intentionally scaffolding student learning and engagement as part of an immersive first-year learning experience.	Create a New Student Experience Framework that maps intentional co-curricular student engagement and learning opportunities throughout the entire first-year experience (Build Capacity).
	Provide proactive programming and experiential initiatives and support harm reduction approaches to substance use and provide healthy alternatives to socializing (Build Understanding).
	Develop online modules for parents/supporters to be empowered to support their student in their transition to university and throughout their first-year experience (Build Understanding).
	Establish a transition year program to support student success (both pre-entrance and during first year), including formal (e.g., camps and courses) and informal supports (e.g., mentorship). Areas of focus will include the development of a Summer Bridge Program focused on academic orientation, community connection, strengths assessment, and connection to local communities (Build Capacity).

	Develop high-quality co-curricular learning experiences and transitions programming for off-campus, mature, distance learning, transfer students and student athletes that enrich their student experience (Build Understanding).
	Coordinate a Winter transitions program to welcome new students arriving in January, and re-orient all first-year students to the programs, services and supports provided by StFX (Build Understanding).
	Continue partnership between StFX Student Services and Graduate Studies to enhance understanding of the specific needs of graduate and distance learning students and deepen an understanding of their transitional needs (Build Understanding).
	Leverage the “Being Xaverian” campaign as an opportunity to collect and share stories of diverse student experiences at StFX (Build Understanding).
	Leverage the development of digital content and engagement to provide additional student employment opportunities, with priority for students from historically excluded groups (Build Capacity).
	Create an online web platform for StFX students (undergraduate, graduate, full-time or part-time) to share their stories, guided by a content strategy based in student flourishing (Build Connection).

3. Strengthen Mental Health Supports

Support wholistic student success and well-being through the development of an integrated, multi-tier support model that promotes a philosophy of care which recognizes everyone within the StFX community has a role to play in supporting wholistic student success and well-being.	Develop strong partnerships with faculty and departments on campus to innovate our programming based on evidence-based practices and cutting-edge research (Build Connection).
	Create evidence informed frameworks that support our Residence Education programming, Alcohol and Substance Use Strategy and Mental Health & Wellness initiatives, ensuring that our programs are sensitive to diverse student experiences (Build Capacity).
	Build clear structures, pathways and supports to more easily enable others to engage with Residence and Student Services initiatives through existing mechanisms such as Service Learning, McKenna Leadership programs, etc (Build Connection).
	Develop tools and resources to support administrative leaders, faculty, staff, and students in identifying signs and symptoms of distress or at-risk behaviours, and competencies in helping others by supporting those in need in accessing appropriate resources (Build Understanding).
	Frontload transitional supports for all students that normalize help seeking behaviours (e.g., incorporate mental health and wellness, and campus supports and services within Orientation and Extended Orientation programming; build into graduate student orientations, varsity sport teams’ training, etc.) (Build Understanding).
	Provide proactive and timely programs, services and resources that focus on the social determinants of health at all points along the mental health continuum (from mental well-being to urgent crisis).

	<p>Make changes to how services are structured to match how students are accessing information and services. We prioritize reducing wait times; streamlining service pathways and follow-up for students, faculty and staff; and improved communications around resources and services (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Review current policies, procedures, protocols and processes through an anti-racism and trauma-informed lens. Create more inclusive policies, processes and practices, where needed (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Draw on student-centered data and assessment to develop and adapt programs, services and resources to meet the needs of both specific and broad intersectional student identities, including Indigenous, Black, minoritized, 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, graduate students, mature students, and students with disabilities (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Identify and streamline pathways to care to support early identification, self-care, and help-seeking by putting students in contact with the appropriate resources at the appropriate time (Build Connection).</p>
	<p>Build capacity for Residence Life Leadership Team and Diversity Engagement Centre to apply developmental mentorship approach to early intervention and supporting wholistic student success and well-being (Build Capacity)</p>
	<p>Implement a case management model to support “students of concern”. This may include students with mental illnesses or students who may be experiencing mental distress, who are in academic difficulty or may be heading toward or experiencing a crisis (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Convene regular Students of Concern Committee meetings to expand and formalize a coordinated, wrap around support model between faculty, academic units, and student services partners with systems and policies to facilitate communication and foster integrated and student-centric supports. By improving our coordinated response we aim to assess risk on an individual and community level to promote the safety and well-being of the StFX community (Build Connection).</p>
	<p>Partner with Human Resources and others to ensure appropriate care and support are provided to student and professional staff who support student well-being. This includes front line supports and in residence in times of crises, recognizing broad stressors that impact the community.</p>
<p>4. Engage All Students in Meaningful Experiential Learning</p>	
<p>Facilitate guided learning opportunities for all students that proactively advance common learning goals across</p>	<p>Frontload dedicated co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities in first-year to support student orientation and transition, strengths-based learning, and essential skills development (Build Capacity).</p>

<p>living and learning environments and years of study. Cultivate agency by engaging students in the process of discovering their strengths and personalized pathways to success.</p>	<p>Develop an integrated Experiential and Co-Curricular Learning framework to scaffold intentional student learning and engagement opportunities through all years of study (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Leverage mentorship to provide additional student employment opportunities, with priority for students from historically excluded groups (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Develop a digital Experiential Learning Catalogue/Co-Curricular Record (CCR) as a tool to help students thoughtfully select co-curricular engagement opportunities, integrate their campus experiences, communicate the development of skills, and reflect on their development in the areas of meaning and purpose (Build Connection).</p>
	<p>Cultivate signature spaces and events on campus that engage alumni, the Antigonish community, students, faculty and staff in spirited and sanctioned events that inspire a sense of connection (Build Connection).</p>
	<p>Develop with our partners innovative and creative Experiential and Co-curricular learning Framework that allows students to gain a range of transferrable skills that allow them to be agile, adaptable and engaged members of their community (Build Capacity)</p>
	<p>Strengthen capacity of on-campus and off-campus employers to create trauma informed and supportive workplaces (Build Capacity)</p>
<p>5. Radically Welcome and Engage Students from Historically Excluded Groups</p>	
<p>Radically welcome students by advancing equitable access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed programs, resources and services for students from historically-excluded populations. Create opportunities for students to cultivate meaningful connections and sense of community.</p>	<p>Embed equity and inclusion in the development and execution of special student-facing events, and programming (Extended Orientation Programming, Homecoming, etc.) to the representative of diverse lived experiences and identities present in our university community (Build Capacity).</p>
	<p>Create interactive/experiential training for all students. Content will be tailored for each role, with a consistent focus on teaching anti-racism and decolonization, anti-discrimination, cultural competency, equity, diversity and inclusion (Build Understanding).</p>
	<p>Scaffold comprehensive training for students in leadership roles, varsity sport, learning abroad/exchange, etc. that they commit to, and enact, in their roles in our community (Build Understanding).</p>
	<p>Streamline access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed supports and services available to students who have experienced acts of racism, harassment and/or discrimination. This will include reviewing policies, processes and procedures within StFX that may unintentionally discriminate, and revise policies to better enable equity, diversity and inclusion (Build Capacity)</p>
	<p>Expand support model for students with disabilities (including temporary or episodic) to incorporate a <i>whole student approach</i> through mentoring, case management, outreach and engagement (Build Capacity).</p>

	Develop targeted co-curricular programming for students with disabilities, with a focus on university transition, career transition and self-determination (Build Capacity).
	Maintain the Student Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide leadership opportunities for students with disabilities and ensure that their voices and lived experiences are reflected in program and service design (Build Capacity).
	Provide and secure financial support and subject-matter expertise to establish meaningful career development programming (Build Capacity)
	Mobilize campus and community partners to inform and support initiatives such as mentoring programs, with a focus on mentorship for students from historically excluded groups (Build Connection)
	Commit to equitable and inclusive recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention and offboarding practices that increase the diversity among our student staff complements, in particular representation from Indigenous, Black, minoritized communities and persons with disabilities (Build Capacity).
6. Enrich the Residence Experience	
All first-year residence students have access to resources, programs and initiatives that support meaningful and authentic campus connections, which build the foundation for their personal success and continued academic achievement.	Transition the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) position to live-in only roles, with an associated plan to grow infrastructure and improve policies to support the role (Build Capacity).
	Build capacity for Residence Life Leadership Team to frontload developmental mentorship in support of first-year transition and student success through intentional leadership development and training opportunities (Build Capacity).
	Create a Case Manager position to provide coordinated supports for students living in residence. For StFX, this will operationalize wrap-around supports for students in need by individuals who have knowledge of services on-campus and off-campus (Build Capacity).
	Update the Residence Education Model to ensure consistency in student learning and engagement across residences (i.e., safer socializing, bystander awareness, sexualized violence, diversity and inclusion, Being Xaverian) (Build Understanding).
	Frontload transitional support and education for first-year residence students by aligning the Residence Education Curriculum with the development and implementation of an Extended Orientation and Transitions Program (Build Capacity).
	Develop Residence Community Living Standards and adopt additional formalized assessment measures within residence to monitor performance (Build Capacity).
	Review and update the Residence Code of Conduct to create a safe residence environment and empowers all students to become responsible citizens (Build Capacity).