Recommendation, re: Student Readiness
Preparing Students for Online Learning

Recommendation #1: **that offices of the university communicating with new students encourage and promote the *X Starts Here* online resources project for first-year students. The project will include reassuring preparatory resources for students, related to online learning and the online classroom experience, and those resources should be made available upon the announcement of a significantly online fall term (if such is the case).**

Recommendation #2: **that a version of the *X Starts Here* project be made available for and promoted to all returning students under the name *X Continues Here*, with relevant resources for returners, particularly related to online education, also available upon an announcement regarding the fall term.**

Rationale:

The *X Starts Here* project represents an existing successful outreach, a Moodle-based collection of resources launched in 2019 for the incoming 2019-20 class. Project modules are based on the principle that XSH should communicate "what StFX wants you to know before you come," in short, accessible format. Contributors from the Registrar's Office, Student Life, Academic Advising, the Student Success Centre, IT Services, Student Aid, Student Accounts, the Office of Internationalization, and more produced modules for 2019 and 2020, offering answers to new students' most common questions and alerting them to potential pitfalls ahead.

X Starts Here currently includes modules on:
- Registration
- Academic Advising
- Health & Wellness
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Equity & Diversity
- Academic Expectations
- Time Management
- Note Taking
- Critical Thinking
- Academic Integrity
- Online Learning *
- Technology
- International (incoming students)
- International (exchange students)
- Budgeting
- Scholarships

- Grants & Loans
- Bursaries
- Student Accounts

An online learning module is under construction with the participation of the Student Success Centre and Continuing & Distance Education. It will introduce students to Moodle and Collaborate, including the various activities they will likely be expected to complete in those platforms, and inform students about the best practices for online learning.

Approximately 60% of the incoming class viewed content on *X Starts Here* ahead of the 2019-20 academic year. However, the rate of access to modules within the site lagged at about 25% of the possible total. The project team has cooperated with the Marketing and Communications office to increase visibility and reach of the project for the 2020-21 year, but more efforts are desirable to reach 80%+ of the incoming class (and any significant number of the returning class).

The availability of *X Starts Here* has already been communicated to new incoming students, and it is familiar to last year's incoming class. Released in early June with content related to increasingly salient issues of academic integrity, time management, student wellbeing, etc., the program can be adapted and expanded quickly and at minimal cost. It is a medium through which students would expect to receive guidance on navigating the move to online learning.

Next Steps:
1. Allocate funds for a greater incentive for completion of the XSH modules, up to $1000 [AVPs office]
2. Expand the communication strategy to include Students Union and faculty participation, also making use of the weekly bulletin for students & parents [SSC/Students Union/Ctr for Teaching & Learning/Student Life]
3. Acquire a license for the H5P Moodle add-on, so that there is no longer a cap on views that disables modules after 1000 visitors [ITS]
4. Integrate system recommendations from tech' working group into Online Learning module [SSC]
5. Development team for XSH meets to select content for inclusion into upper-years' version [SSC/Registrar's Office/ITS]
6. Place links to XSH & XCH on stfx.ca, Registrar's Office help page, theU.ca, the Moodle banner, and other university sites. [various offices]