



February 12, 2021

To the campus community,

As we prepare for Nova Scotia's Heritage Day long weekend, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what we've achieved together so far this term and look ahead to the work before us.

First, I want to offer a heartfelt thank you to all staff who worked to keep our campus running during the midst of this week's winter storm. It underscored for me the dedication of our essential service teams across campus who continue to do tremendous work keeping our students fed and safe, our roadways and paths clear, and our facilities clean and secure. On behalf of the StFX community, thank you. It is no overstatement to say StFX could not operate without you.

I am also very pleased to share that because of your diligence in following COVID-19 health and safety protocols, we are successfully delivering approximately 75% of our classes in a face-to-face, in-person format. This is the highest ratio of in-person classes for any university in the entire country, which itself represents a remarkable achievement in the midst of very trying circumstances.

It goes without saying that StFX is incredibly fortunate to be able to safely offer so many in-person classes and deliver on the personalized, immersive academic experience that our students value so deeply. At the same time, having this many face-to-face classes also carries a certain weight of responsibility for our entire campus community. We have seen how quickly the situation with COVID-19 can change, including over 200 new cases in recent days in Newfoundland and news that two Nova Scotia cases reported in January were in fact the new UK variant of the disease. In other words: while Nova Scotia currently enjoys a lower caseload than most parts of Canada, this is no time to let our guard down.

I appreciate that navigating the pandemic has brought many personal sacrifices for our community members. However, to complete this academic year in a face-to-face format, I ask that we continue to do everything in our collective power to reduce opportunities for transmission of the virus. It's critical that we continue to follow all COVID-19 health and safety protocols even when there are no known cases of the virus within our region. To this point, the

university is strongly encouraging all StFX students to stay in the Antigonish area this long weekend and avoid any non-essential travel, even within the province. This will help to limit opportunities for the transmission of the virus. I also want to encourage everyone to get some rest, enjoy some outdoor time in and about our beautiful area, and take a few moments for relaxation and fun over this long weekend.

Thank you for the diligence and care you've shown so far this year. There are approximately six weeks left of winter term; we've come this far together, and I know we have the resolve to finish this academic year off strong. Continue to take care of yourselves and our community.

Have a safe, restful and healthy holiday weekend,

Andy

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