



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

To the campus community,

Over the past week, we've welcomed thousands of students to StFX and our community and ushered in a new academic year. It was a pleasure on Welcome Days for Linda and I to meet so many new Xaverians and their families and share their excitement for the experiences and opportunities that are ahead. Welcome Days and Orientation Week do not simply come together on their own, and I wish to thank all of the StFX employees and students who worked tirelessly to create a welcoming and warm environment for our incoming students. I also want to give a particular mention to the StFX O-CREW whose outstanding enthusiasm had everyone in good spirits throughout the weekend.

It feels good to have a new academic year underway. However, I would be remiss if I didn't express my shock and disappointment regarding the incident in which individuals climbed on top of an ambulance that was responding to a call on campus. This type of behaviour is beyond shameful, and make no mistake, is unacceptable under any circumstance. To show such disrespect to our province's first responders who have worked so hard in the time of COVID-19 to keep our communities safe is appalling. As per Vice-President Elizabeth Yeo's email earlier this week, any student directly implicated will be referred to StFX's disciplinary process.

Although such an incident casts a shadow on the many good things that are happening on campus, I do wish to recognize the very positive engagement of the vast majority of our campus community members. For instance, we're only days into the semester and already we see our students and faculty engaging together in the types of learning experiences that make StFX so incredible. Our students and employees continue to adhere without issue to our mask wearing requirement while inside campus buildings, and members of the university executive team are being met with great positivity and warmth as they go door-to-door within the community to meet with off-campus students to remind them of the importance of being good community neighbours within our town. There remains great confidence that this will be another good year for students, employees, and the broader community of Antigonish alike, a year that builds on the experience and knowledge we amassed last year.

MANDATORY TESTING POLICY AND PROOF OF VACCINATION

Yesterday, Andrew Beckett, our Vice-President of Finance and Administration, provided the campus with information related to our Mandatory Testing Policy. Please take the time to read his email and the very important policy attached as it affects every member of the StFX community. I also want to point out that earlier this week the province announced its planned move into Phase 5 of its reopening plans, which included a new 'Proof of Vaccination' requirement in October. We are reviewing what this decision means to the university community and will communicate once we know more. In the meantime, please be reminded that masks are required inside all buildings on campus (except residences) until at least September 30, regardless of the status of the province's reopening.

COVID WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Finally, as we learned yesterday, we are reminded that we're in the midst of a pandemic -- COVID is in our community. It is essential that we remain focused on our health and safety, and the health of those around us. Please be extra vigilant in the days ahead. Even as the province transitions into Phase 5 and reduces its restrictions, it's incumbent upon us to practice safe and healthy behaviours in order to stay together. In some cases across the country, we are witnessing increased cases of COVID resulting in institutions reverting to online delivery. Only by working together can we avoid this. The recipe is simple: get vaccinated, wear your mask, wash your hands, keep your social gatherings small and consistent, and limit your travel.

Working together and for each other we will continue to move forward. Best wishes to all for a successful semester.

Sincerely,

Andy

ANDY HAKIN

PRESIDENT & VICE-CHANCELLOR

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I acknowledge that StFX is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.