Memorandum of Understanding  
between  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY  
AND  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER STUDENTS’ UNION

I. Purpose of This MOU
This memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlines the shared principles and actions of St. Francis Xavier University (hereinafter referred as "StFX" or the “University”) and St. Francis Xavier Student’s Union (hereinafter referred as "the Union") concerning our shared commitment to providing a safe and healthy learning environment specifically relating to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (the “pandemic”).

The provincial departments of Public Health and Labour and Advanced Education’s Occupational Health and Safety Division establish the standards under which all universities must operate. These standards guided the University in the development of the suite of Return to Campus Plans and the University meets and/or exceeds the standards required to operate during the pandemic.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 Pandemic Plan continues to evolve consistent with the Principles articulated below, operational requirements and the changing standards and requirements of Public Health and Labour and Advanced Education’s Occupational Health and Safety Division. We will review and update this MOU regularly but no less than twice each academic term.

II. Term
This MOU shall be in effect for the 2020 – 21 academic year, beginning no later than August 27th. It may be amended and/or extended based upon the agreement of StFX and the Union.

III. Principles
a) The University will operate in compliance with the “Public Health” directives issued by Nova Scotia Public Health under the Provincial Emergency Act to contain the spread of COVID-19. These directives can change with time as the effect of the pandemic changes. StFX takes direction from Public Health and Labour and Advanced Education’s Occupational Health and Safety Division and reserves the right to impose additional measures for the health and safety of communities, both on and off campus.
The StFX Office of Student Life will advise students should there be any changes to the Public Health directives and/or the Covid – 19 Pandemic Plan Student Community Protocols. Information about changes and current requirements will be posted to the StFX website https://www.stfx.ca/coronavirus.

b) A combination of approaches will be used to address a broad consideration of needs:

- Establish and promote public health practices through a robust communication plan;
- Proactively manage and respond expeditiously when students become symptomatic or ill to support student health and academic accommodation;
- Provide supportive physical and mental health interventions through health promotion and intervention when individuals require more support; and,
- Find new ways to preserve our unique, vibrant campus culture as an essential element of the plan.

c) The University will bring an equity lens to its operations in order to protect our most vulnerable populations (medically susceptible, underrepresented student groups). We will provide protocols for seeking individualized accommodations specific to their needs.

d) The University and The Union will create an ad-hoc committee to identify and address issues relating to the responsibilities in the M.O.U. Terms of reference of the committee will be jointly established. The committee will be comprised of administration, risk management, and the Students’ Union, and will be made 50% of students. The committee will meet regularly beginning no later than August 27th.

IV. Operational Roles and Responsibilities

a) Communication with students is key to the success of this reopening plan. Methods of communication will include:
- COVID-19 interactive webpage, on StFX.ca (https://www.stfx.ca/coronavirus)
- Keeping You Informed emails from the President
- News You Can Use weekly bulletins
- Parent and Student Advisory Panels (summer)
- Important announcements and news shared through the X and U community mixer events (summer)
- University social media
- Residence and Off-Campus community group social media sites

Public Health is responsible for communications concerning COVID-19. This includes statistics concerning testing, and the number of positive cases.

b) StFX University and the Union commit to ongoing dialogue and communication with respect to COVID-19.
B. StFX commits to the following supports for students and community:

General:
- Establish and support the following health and safety protocols:
  1. Be Symptom-Free
  2. Practice Diligent Hygiene
  3. Maintain Physical Distancing (MPD)
  4. Proximity Work: When MPD is not possible
  5. Non-Medical Masks (NMM)
  6. Limit interaction
  7. Respect and care for yourself, your peers, and your community
- Provide Public Health and Safety educational resources, communications and promotions (print, social media, digital signs) to promote the protocols and how to follow them
- Provide enhanced cleaning of the campus
- Provide hand sanitization stations and increased sanitization of high touch areas
- Assess and adapt campus spaces to promote physical distancing
- Adjust the move in and arrival process for all students to enable them to meet the Public Health and Safety standards by introducing new check in, health screening and a “green bracelet” process. The green bracelet signifies that students either do not require self-isolation or have completed their required self-isolation period and that the student has reviewed and agreed to adhere to the COVID-19 Pandemic Plan: Student Community Protocols.
- Assign a support person to each student (on or off campus) who is required to self-isolate upon their initial arrival. The support person will assist the student during self-isolation.
- Share the plan for responding to an outbreak on campus.
- Assess and evolve each university service to adhere to Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety standards. This may require such things as provision of virtual services, Personal Protective Equipment, plexiglass barriers, reallocations of space, and training.

Academic:
- Provide a mixed-methods delivery model of course offerings. Require the wearing of masks in classrooms, reduce classroom capacity to permit appropriate physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, safe traffic flow patterns in academic buildings; safe study spaces with appropriate distancing; and virtual office hours with faculty members. Provide professional development support to faculty and teaching staff for the delivery of high-quality online courses.
- Support the recommendations of the Online Preparedness Task Force regarding equitable access to course content.
- Provide transition programming through the Student Success Centre X Starts Here academic segments.
• Provide support, through academic advising, accommodations and Letters of Permission for students who choose to remain online and through transfer credits to complete educational goals at StFX. (Letters of Permission enable students to register in classes offered by other universities and apply the credits to their StFX degree).
• The University will communicate the opportunity and process for accessing online, shared course offerings available through the Maple League of Universities.
• Provide ongoing academic accommodations for students experiencing extenuating circumstances, which include sickness and to address concerns and provide support to immunocompromised students so that they may meet the learning objectives of their courses and be given the opportunity to be fairly evaluated on their mastery of course material. Students with permanent disabilities will follow the Policy for Students with Disabilities. The University will develop and communicate the protocol students may use to seek academic and other accommodations for temporary circumstances related to the pandemic. The protocol will include the roles and responsibilities of the University, the faculty and the student.
• Outline the process by which individual students, immunocompromised, for example, may identify and request accommodation for potential barriers to access and success.
• Require the submission of detailed research plans outlining protocols for safely conducting on campus or field-based research undertaken by faculty and students to ensure adherence with public health protocols and directives.
• Guarantee that returning students who defers their registration for the 20-21 academic year will also be eligible to defer their scholarship, if applicable.

Student services and facilities:
• Introduce a new service model for new students: Every new student has an assigned student services advisor. This will be their “person” to go to for proactive transition support, ongoing guidance, monitoring and informed referral to appropriate services.
  • Survey students to assess student needs and comfort levels.
  • Prioritize outreach to those who can benefit from early supports
  • Provide opportunities for new students to build relationships with their advisor and other students before they arrive on campus.
  • Provide regular individual peer and advisor check-ins with students during term.
  • Provide proactive, specialized advising for black, indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ students who self-identify
• Returning students who require referral to campus services may contact the Office of Student Life: studentlife@stfx.ca
• Offer new online professional development for faculty and staff who wish to build their capacity to recognize and respond to students in distress.
• Introduce a new app (XGo) and new communications approaches to connect students with the tools, resources and services available to support them during the pandemic.
• Promote mental health self-help resources online.
• Provide healthy community, including mental health, workshops and groups with delivery via social media, virtually and in person (when social distancing can be maintained).
• Provide stress reduction programs that align with Public Health guidelines.
• Add a new full time Clinical Therapist position to Health and Counselling Services including increased after-hours services.
• Provide dedicated support person for residence students required to isolate and quarantine, including meal delivery

Health and Safety:

The Health and Counselling Center
• Implement "Health Myself" into the MedAccess EMR, which has the option of a "virtual visit" feature that will allow nurses to conduct intake assessments via secure video conference with students. This feature will be available to all health care personnel within the H+C Centre.
• Provide a secure platform for virtual access to Counsellors, Clinical Therapists and meetings with the Sexual Violence Response Advocate.
• Purchase PPE and other required supplies to be COVID-19 compliant for health and safety

Athletics and Recreation:
• Review strength, conditioning and other related activities to mitigate the potential for COVID-19 transmission in sport and recreation programming.
• Review all recreation areas and facilities to employ physical distancing measures. Establish and monitor maximum occupancy plan using access control, use-by-appointment, or other measures

Diversity and Engagement Center, Chaplaincy, Career and Employment Services will provide virtual service and programming options.

Food Services:
• Provide a plated food service
• Provide enhanced cleaning of the dining area
• Reduce seating capacity in dining areas to promote social distancing
• Extend meal hall service hours of operation to provide students with more flexible access
• Provide meal delivery and ordering system to support isolated and quarantine students
• Revise catering menus to provide options that are compliant with pandemic standards
Residence

- Eliminate double rooms converting them to single rooms. Students who originally requested a double room will be charged the rate for the double room.
- Add new residence buildings to increase residence capacity (FX Hall, International House). Provide the resourcing and staffing for the additional buildings – administration and staffing, safety, cleaning, services.
- Provide complimentary accommodations and meal plan for residence students who must self-isolate prior to term.
- Reduce maximum room occupancy in shared spaces to support students to comply with public health.
- Review all residence buildings and security systems to support the no guest policy in residence.
- Promote the process by which students may request health accommodations in residence due to COVID-19 on the University COVID-19 Website. Examples of possible accommodations may include, but not be limited to, room type and washroom access, and adjustments to move in dates.
- Provide new Community Life Coordinators (CLC) positions in the residence to support community health, safety, monitoring and enforcement.
- Adjust move in and arrival process to comply with Public Health and Safety standards.

B. The Union commits to

- All Student Union services will be in accordance to the Nova Scotia health directives.
- Actively promote to students the importance of the protocols and their individual and collective responsibility for adhering to them.
- Provide fun, inclusive programming in residence during two-week isolation.
- Commit to safe, inclusive events all year in accordance with Nova Scotia health directives.
- Support off-campus students by adapting DriveU to deliver merchandise from the Student Food Resource Centre to students.
- The Students’ Union will expand as many services as possible to be available online.
- Advocating for increased accessibility for in-person class to be available online
- Prioritizing increased student consultation
- Actively pursue donations of non-medical masks through the Student Food Resource Centre
- Partner with the University on agreed pandemic related communications by sharing them through the Students’ Union communications channels
StFX Student Community Protocols

Students commit to the StFX Student Community Protocols which describe new expectations for students during the pandemic. While the COVID-19 Pandemic Plan - Student Community Protocols is the binding document for students, the following is a summary of the commitments for students:

1. Students who are required to self-isolate after traveling (check https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/what-it-means-for-nova-scotians/#self-isolation-requirements to see who meets the criteria) must submit a Travel and Isolation Plan (insert form link) before arrival.

2. Students living on or off campus must check-in with the university upon arrival in Antigonish. Students who have completed their isolation period and/or are not symptomatic will be issued a green bracelet that is to be worn at all times for the month of September. The bracelet will be required to enter any academic or administrative buildings on campus.

3. All campus community members are required to monitor for symptoms and follow the direction of 811, which will assess the symptoms and provide isolation and testing information. Students who have symptoms are required to shelter in place until directed otherwise and not to attend class, or meal hall or anywhere on campus. Accommodations will be made for students who cannot attend in-person classes because they are self-isolating.

4. Students who are directed to self-isolate or quarantine are required to immediately inform the university by email at isolate@stfx.ca or by calling 902-870-2976. Students must cooperate with contact tracing.

5. Physical distancing of two metres, frequent handwashing and other hygiene practices, and wearing non-medical masks are the best way to prevent the spread of the virus. Students are required to bring two non-medical masks. Physical distancing and handwashing/hygiene is required by students on or off campus in accordance with Public Health. Masks are required on campus and strongly recommended off campus.

6. Gathering limits set by Public Health will be followed on and off campus. These limits may change depending on the ongoing risk assessment of virus in our region and campus. Current maximum gathering sizes are available at https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/restriction-updates/

7. Residences are closed to guests – only residents may enter through the designated entrance to their residence. All other entrances will be for emergency exit only. Meal hall service will be full service (no self-serve options) and will follow the physical distancing and gathering limitations set by Public Health.
8. To allow for new and returning students to adapt to the new way of living and studying on campus, the initial occupancy period will be substance free in residences. Decision making concerning this requirement will be guided by the adoption of the COVID-19 Pandemic Plan Student Community Guidelines, completion rates of health and safety programming, and evidence of a healthy community in accordance with Public Health standards. Students, regardless of age, are not permitted to consume alcohol or other intoxicating substances in residence during the adjustment period.

9. Restricting Your Travel (No Fall Reading Week) Once settled within Antigonish, we strongly encourage students to restrict and limit travel to essential travel only during the academic term. In fact, StFX’s Fall Reading Week has been cancelled in order to minimize campus community travel and the risk of exposure from other communities outside of Antigonish.

10. Under the Health Protection Act in Nova Scotia, individuals can be fined up to $1000 for failing to follow the self-isolation requirements, physical distancing, gathering size limits, or other regulations imposed under the act. Owners or renters are responsible for the actions of their guests. The local RCMP notifies StFX when they respond to a call that results in a charge or summary offence ticket issued to a student. StFX will apply the Community Code of Conduct process and may impose additional outcomes such as probation, loss of student privileges, residence suspension or expulsion from the University.

V. Contacts

Administrative Contacts

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<tr>
<th>StFX University</th>
<th>StFX Student Union</th>
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<td>Patrick Wallace, VP Finance, <a href="mailto:su_finance@stfx.ca">su_finance@stfx.ca</a></td>
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VI. Communication and Media
The parties in this agreement shall acknowledge the others in all public releases of information about the collaboration and the Program. StFX and the StFX Student Union will have an opportunity to review and provide comment on the respective party’s MOU communications prior to their release.

VII. Further Cooperation
The parties hereby commit to cooperating with one another to address these issues as they arise and to resolve them based on the agreements stated in this MOU.

VIII. Signatures

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<tr>
<td>Andy Hakin</td>
<td>Sarah Elliott</td>
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<td>President and Vice-Chancellor</td>
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