



November 20, 2020

To the campus community,

Just this week, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Robert Strang, confirmed evidence of community spread within the province after reporting its first cases of COVID-19 in the public school system. While we closely watch what will come of these reports, it serves as yet another reminder of just how careful we have to be to protect against community spread within our own Antigonish bubble we've worked so hard to create.

With less than four weeks to go before the holiday break, now is the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to successfully and safely getting through the fall semester. We do this by not letting complacency set in – especially as COVID-19 cases are on the rise in the province. By continuing to wear masks, practicing proper social distancing, limiting our social circles to a consistent group of 10, and frequently washing our hands, we can be successful.

As simple as these practices are, there are a couple, perhaps less obvious, actions that we need to be mindful of in the weeks ahead:

- **Limit Your Travel:** As the holidays approach, it is tempting to head to the larger urban areas to visit with friends or shop for gifts for our loved ones. With community spread now upon us and COVID-19 cases on the rise, I remind the StFX community to limit travel as much as possible. Stay within our local community and take advantage of the shop local drive currently happening in our community. If travel outside of Antigonish is essential, then do everything you can to limit your exposure in larger, more urban areas and practice the familiar preventative measures of wearing a mask, ensuring social distancing, and frequent handwashing.
- **X-Ring ceremony, an opportunity to demonstrate Xaverian values:** Our collective efforts to date are allowing us to proceed with a face-to-face X-Ring ceremony, albeit a very different ceremony this year. We will be using several venues across campus to ensure proper social distancing and adherence to limits of public gatherings. Guests (family, friends or other supporters) are not permitted on campus and we've even requested that they not to travel to Antigonish at all. There will also be no post-X-Ring ceremony party or gatherings on campus. Of course, this is not how we want it to be, but we remind students that within two weeks of the ceremony, everyone will be home

for the holiday break and able to celebrate safely with family and supporters at that time. After the formal ceremony, demonstrate your Xaverian values by limiting gathering sizes and ensure that you do not put yourself and our community at risk. The future operation of our university depends upon our community remaining strong and safe. Final details of the X-Ring ceremony will be communicated next week, but please understand that if circumstances change due to increased risk to the health and safety of our community, the ceremony will be cancelled. This underscores the critical actions that we all must take to ensure the virus remains outside of our community.

Having said all of that, on behalf of the StFX leadership team, I wish to reiterate just how proud we are of all the hard work our campus community is doing to keep us safe and our academic year intact. It has been a herculean effort, but we need to keep going. In fact, this week you may have noticed members of the StFX administration in various places around the campus thanking students, handing out masks, hand sanitizers and other items. We know it hasn't been easy; however, it is rewarding to see our students demonstrating the value of putting community first, day-in and day-out. This is the Xaverian way.

Thank you and please continue the good work.

Sincerely,

Andy

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