



August 21, 2020

To the campus community,

Since arriving in Antigonish in early July, Linda and I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the community post-isolation. Our thanks to all who have warmly welcomed us to our new home. As you can appreciate, arriving during the midst of a global pandemic is not the way I envisioned transitioning into my first few weeks and months as StFX President. Navigating the pandemic has meant that I have not met as many of you as I would like but this gives me much to look forward to in the weeks and months ahead. As you see me out and about on campus, hopefully still recognizable behind my mask, don't hesitate to introduce yourself.

It's a busy time around campus as we continue to prepare for the return of our students. Plans that have been evolving for months are being implemented and I wish to thank the many staff and faculty -- literally teams of people -- and those within the community whose tremendous work has brought us to this point. StFX is in a state of high readiness for the start of another academic year. It's not the type of year we've experienced in the past, but I have confidence that the strength of this community will enable us to collectively rise and address the challenges that are ahead of us.

In the remainder of this note, I think it is important to provide you with an update of some of the changes to the beginning of this fall semester that have been introduced as a consequence of needing to navigate the new landscape we find ourselves to be in.

Yesterday, the University received some good news from the Nova Scotia Government regarding mandatory COVID-19 asymptomatic testing for students entering the province from outside the Atlantic bubble. StFX will be working with the Province to host an on-campus testing centre for our students. This is a new, late-breaking development that adds a strong control element to our existing planning framework for the return of students. This is something our University has been pushing for on behalf of our community for a number of months and we are extremely grateful to the province for working with us to achieve our goals. Please be watching for more details on this.

Related to students traveling and self-isolating, please be aware that StFX has already established a protocol that all students coming from outside Atlantic Canada are to provide a self-isolation plan and to date, we are very pleased with the compliance of submission of these

plans. For off-campus students, supports have been put in place to assist and monitor them during their self-isolation period. We expect most of these students to begin arriving next week. Those living on campus will be isolating in residence and are scheduled to arrive on August 27th and 28th. Our residences are prepared for their arrival, complete with food service, and a variety of activities aimed at supporting their physical and mental health while in isolation. My thanks also go to our Students' Union executive and their teams for the tremendous amount of planning and work they have done in preparing for the return of our students. Despite the new realities imposed by the pandemic, I have witnessed great determination to produce supportive and engaging experiences for our students.

Welcome Day is also just around the corner and will also look different this year. Instead of welcoming all new students in one day, it has now become a two-day event in order to limit the amount of people coming into the Keating Centre at one time. It will be held on Sept. 10th and Sept. 11th. By these dates, all students coming from outside the Atlantic bubble will have completed their isolation period and will arrive for Welcome Day at the Keating Centre with students who are coming from the Atlantic provinces in pre-scheduled blocks of 50 at a time.

From an employee perspective, approximately 50% of staff have returned and are working on campus. Of course, in the interests of minimizing unnecessary campus traffic, some employees will continue to work from home if they are able. For those yet to return, a reminder that you are required to complete training on the new COVID protocols prior to arrival.

The distribution of green bracelets, which signify that an individual has successfully completed any necessary self-isolation protocols and, if applicable, the required employee training, will begin on Monday, August 24th. The green bracelets allow students, staff, and faculty to access academic and administrative buildings on campus. For staff and faculty who have already completed training and are working on campus, instructions will be sent as to when you can pick up your green bracelet shortly. For those yet to complete the Return to Campus protocols, your green bracelet can be picked up when you visit the Security Office to receive your Return to Campus package (upon your first visit back to campus) beginning Monday.

These are just some of many changes we've had to make as we continue to adjust to a life living within a pandemic. It has taken many hands to get us to this point and it will take our entire community to see us through to success. Every one of us has a very important part to play. My sincere thanks for your many efforts in these most challenging of times. I am both proud to be with you and working for you.

Sincerely,

Andy

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