



September 4, 2020

To the campus community,

As we head into the Labour Day long weekend, I'm pleased to report that after months of planning and preparation, we have started the process of officially welcoming students back to campus and our community.

StFX has received travel and self-isolation plans for 1,270 students coming from outside the Atlantic bubble. As of this morning, nearly all of these students are in some stage of completing their 14-day self-isolation, the majority in and around the Antigonish area. Within our residences alone, nearly 400 students have completed Week One of their isolation period. Within the wider community, over 230 staff, faculty and community volunteers are assisting approximately 600 more with their self-isolation requirement. By all accounts, this transition period is going well – we are off to a tremendous start.

In particular, I'd like to recognize the tremendous job our staff in Housing and in Student Life, the Students' Union and our Sodexo partners are doing in support of our students. It is no small task to thoughtfully create and execute programming to support the physical and mental wellbeing of our students while they complete their isolation period on campus, let alone think about the logistics of delivering meals to hundreds of students across campus. A special thanks is warranted too for our Health and Counseling staff for operationalizing the COVID-19 testing centre at StFX within what seemed to be hours. This is an invaluable resource and your efforts are much appreciated.

And to our volunteers, you are amazing. Your efforts to support students are remarkable. On behalf of the StFX community, thank you for all you are doing. This wouldn't be possible without your generous support. Your help and welcome means so much to our students.

Finally, I also want to thank our students. You are doing terrific.

To those isolating in residence, you're nearly there. Continue to engage with our programming and staff. I guarantee it will help you through. To our students finishing their isolation within the community, well done. The emails and notes of support I have witnessed are inspiring. As you complete your isolation, don't forget to come to the Keating Centre to get your green bracelet. Having said that, please continue to be mindful and aware that this is a time of

anxiousness. Welcoming people – not just students – into our communities can bring fear of COVID. We, the Xaverian Community, have committed to doing things differently this year, however, one thing that will never change is our commitment to being good neighbours.

These first few weeks are crucial as we settle into a new academic year during a pandemic. I encourage you to be extremely thoughtful and reflective about the role you play in the community and help allay any concerns that may exist around your return to Antigonish. If you are going to socialize, do it safely and responsibly and be mindful of the heightened anxiety of those around you. Follow Public Health guidelines to the letter and be extra considerate to the community. It is incredibly important that we, our collective community, demonstrate our commitment to getting this right by starting our semester off positively. We can do this. We have been doing this. Let's keep it going.

It is inspiring to see the commitment we all have to ensure we are starting this very different academic year in a safe fashion. In the days and weeks ahead, you will hear me reiterate our pledge to be 'good neighbours,' to support each other and to be considerate of each other. I'm pleased to report that we are off to a great start.

Have a safe long weekend,

Sincerely,

Andy

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