



# ACADEMIC IDEAS SUBMISSIONS

Report to APP

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## INTRODUCTION

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In September 2015, as part of the Academic Ideas Fund initiative, a call for academic ideas was sent out via email by the Deans and Academic Vice-President and Provost to faculty, staff, and students asking to identify areas of improvement or desired change for the university. The letter asked “What would you do if you could?” and to elaborate on how ideas might further certain university priorities, namely: strengthening and/or enhancing existing programs, creating new academic initiatives, attracting new/high-achieving students to St.FX, improving retention, and increasing academic engagement of current students. Suggestions could be pertaining to academic offerings as well as co-curricular, extra-curricular or structural changes.

This report provides a listing of the proposals received in response to the call for ideas as well as a brief summary of each idea. We received a total of 69 ideas over the course of four months. These submissions originated from various faculties, departments, and other members of the St.FX community. Submissions were made by individuals or small groups with common interests. There are some common thematic threads running through a number of the proposals. We have grouped the proposals both by broad disciplinary boundary (outlined in the table of contents), and by the type of change brought forward (academic, structural, or otherwise). Original proposals are available in the offices of the Deans of Arts and Sciences for details and clarification.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

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## Health Programming

### Interfaculty, Interdisciplinary, Liberal-Arts Health Program

The Bachelor of Health Studies / Sciences program is proposed as an interdisciplinary introduction to perspectives on, and approaches to, health and health care at the undergraduate level. The program is designed to prepare students for work in healthcare and health related professions as well as future study in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The grounding principle of this program will be to expose students to an introduction to health that considers the biological, chemical, social, economic and psychological aspects of health in order to provide a truly inter-faculty program that will appeal to a range of students whether their interests lie in arts or sciences. Students will enter one of three streams: Biomedical, Social and Environmental, or Preventative Care and Health Promotion as of their second year.

### Bachelor of Health Sciences

The proposal encourages the development of degree programs in health sciences at the undergraduate level. It estimates that, as there are over 300 applications to Human Kinetics each year, and only 130 students are admitted, this new degree program would relieve pressure on Human Kinetics and ensure that students who have an interest in health broadly defined (as opposed to a focus on fitness) would be able to follow a degree that is tailored to their interests and future goals. Given the demand by students for health related courses and for the health studies minor in Human Kinetics, the proposal estimates that these new degrees could bring more than 100 new students to St.FX yearly. The proposal also encourages offering a Bachelor of Arts in the Health Sciences (alongside the Bachelor of Health Sciences).

### Bachelor of Health Sciences (Biomedical Stream)

The proposal suggests the development of a rigorous biomedical stream as part of a larger Bachelor of Health Sciences program. The program aims to attract students wishing to pursue a rigorous degree in understanding human health, the underlying biology, and its applications. The proposal recommends that only students capable of handling the rigours of three science courses in the first year in addition to credits in mathematics and computer

science be admitted. Students taking this stream would also be required to take mandatory non-credit courses as part of the program, with the goal of focusing on what options are available to them after their degree. While the proposal notes that most courses needed for the proposed curriculum are existing at St.FX, it also anticipates some investment would be needed in order to develop the stream. Suggested necessary investment includes the hiring of research-active faculty with direct expertise in biomedicine to ensure a strong offering.

#### Master of Science in Health

The proposal recommends that St.FX consider the development of a Master of Science in Health in order to retain the best students from future programs in Health Studies, Health Sciences and other cognate disciplines.

#### Online Health Studies Certificate

The submission calls for consideration of a fully online certificate in Health. Using Dalhousie's new certificate in Interdisciplinary Health Studies (IDHS) as a model, the program is said to potentially enhance applications to graduate programs and health-related job searches. Students in the IDHS program at Dalhousie take courses in topics pertaining to the Canadian Healthcare System, Aboriginal and rural health, and contemporary food issues from a prevention and health promotion perspective.

#### Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

The submission calls for the development of a complementary and alternative medicine course. It is estimated that the course would be of interest to Human Kinetics, Human Nutrition, Nursing, and Science students broadly. The course is imagined as an impartial and introductory approach to the benefits and questions surrounding complementary and alternative medicine. The proposal suggests in-depth coverage of proven therapies in complementary and alternative medicine.

#### Music Therapy Course for Nurses

The submission proposes the development of a course in music therapy for nurses. The proposal suggests that there would be a fair amount of interest for such a course.

## Food and Nutrition Programming

### Food, Democracy, and Sustainability Studies

The proposal is to create a minor in Food, Democracy, and Sustainability Studies. The aim is to have students consider the theme of food organized around three interrelated pressures: environmental sustainability, justice, and social democracy. The submission envisions collaboration from departments across arts and science, and suggests offering an experiential component to interested students with community partners, including (among others) the Unama'ki Institute on Natural Resources and the Mi'kmaw Conservation Group. The proposal indicates that some new courses are being considered for development in the department of sociology that would fit in well with the minor, namely: Food and the family, a Sociology of Food and Farming, and Indigenous Peoples and Food Security. The authors of the proposal foresee the need for modest budgetary input for a 3-credit course release for an appointed coordinator of the minor.

### Food Service and Business

In order to strengthen the department of Human Nutrition, the proposal suggests formalizing a food service and business emphasis in Human Nutrition. This would allow students to complete work in nutrition, food service management, science, business, and computer applications. To support this emphasis, the proposal foresees the need for a quantity food lab as well as a food focus in order to provide food and support for the campus and to enhance student research and learning opportunities. The aim is to promote food research and the development of nutrition and food related business and entrepreneurial enterprises. Alternatively, the submission suggests formalizing linkages between Business and Science through Human Nutrition courses in order to promote food research and development. The development of the Human Nutrition programming proposed seeks to culminate in the development of a Bachelor of Applied Sciences (BAS)— Culinary Science and Food Service Management, a new bachelor program that would be in partnership with the community colleges in order to cater the growing demand of chef-manager and chef-scientist positions. Students would complete two years of coursework at the community college level and would then transfer to St.FX in order to complete two additional years of coursework. The proposal forecasts investment in developing new and complementary curriculums at both the community college and the university levels.

### Development of Aboriginal Integrated Dietetic Internship (IDI)

Based on the recent Truth and Reconciliation report that calls for additional presence of aboriginal professionals working in health-related fields, the proposal suggests the development of an Aboriginal Integrated Dietetic Internship. In developing the IDI stream,



students of Aboriginal descent would have access to culturally relevant dietetic internship opportunities necessary as part of meeting the requirements for becoming a registered professional dietitian. The Aboriginal IDI program would provide Aboriginal students learning opportunities that focus on Aboriginal food, nutrition and dietetic issues within an Aboriginal context. The proposal foresees the need for a modest investment on the part of the university in order to hire a coordinator whose honorarium would be the equivalent of the stipend for a 3-credit course.

#### Nutrition in Global Health Learning Partnerships

The proposal seeks to develop a partnership between the Human Nutrition department and the Coady International Institute in order to create a Selected Topics course (HNU 495) that would be a case-studies approach to nutrition in Global Health. Participants from the Coady International Institute as well as seniors from the Human Nutrition program will engage in a co-learning session focused on global nutrition issues that pertain to health equity. Students would also engage with student peers located internationally at selected universities. The proposal estimates that this course would attract new, high-achieving students to St.F.X, foster and support innovation in program development, and increase collaboration in learning and teaching across academic units. The authors forecast that investment would be required for the development of a new tenure-track member who would develop the course (including a course relief of 1.5 credits and participation in the Coady summer session to properly establish the partnership between the department and the Coady International Institute).

### **Environmental Sciences / Studies Programming**

#### Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Environment

The proposal offers ways in which St.FX might want to consider streamlining and expanding interdisciplinary offerings broadly pertaining to environmental studies. It encourages the development of courses targeting non-science students in order to ensure all undergraduate students have access to courses encouraging scientific literacy on environmental issues. The expansion of environmental offerings, including the creation of a BSc degree and joint degrees (BSc/BA and BSc/BBA), are imagined as a means to better utilize existing campus expertise and streamlining offerings under the banner of the tentatively named *Institute of Environment and Sustainability*. Students graduating from this program will meet the requirements to pursue graduate education in various environmental disciplines or participate in the community directly. The proposal estimates that students would be very marketable post-graduation because of their interdisciplinary education and because all degree

patterns proposed have the potential to be accredited by Eco Canada, which would mean students would attain the designation of Environmental Professionals. The proposal estimates that St.FX might need to invest in a broader offering of courses in order to better accommodate the new program, but expects the changes to be “relatively mild”.

The proposal also speaks to developing an MSc in Environmental Science to expand upon the successful ESCI MSc and a PhD in Environmental Sciences in collaboration with Memorial University in Newfoundland.

### Climate History Course

The course on climate history is proposed to be offered out of a department in the Faculty of Arts (History, Sociology, Anthropology are mentioned as possible candidates). The climate history course would focus on the developmental effects at the societal level that can be attributed to historical changes in climate. These effects can be analyzed in respect to things such as social movements and agriculture. The proposal identifies this as an important cross-disciplinary topic as it affects society at large.

## Earth Sciences Programming

### Economic Geology Program

The proposal speaks to the need to marry interests in Economics and Geology in response to job market demands. It states that many Geology students study business later and some business students also go on to study geology, but creating a program that would have at its core the relationship between the two would be a unique offering in Canada. The program would incorporate courses in Mathematics, Geology, Business, and Economics. The proposal estimates the need for modest investment in order to develop the program, mostly in the form of a chair in Economic Geology to complement the already existing strength of the Earth Sciences department.

## Biology Programming

### Course Proposal- Biology 391

The proposed course focuses on career planning and advancement. The proposal recommends the course be made a mandatory non-credit course for all students in the advanced major and honours stream. The course would consist of 3 required modules and 6 additional modules from a rotating list. The required modules include workshops in writing,

LinkedIn, and library content. Delivery is proposed to be completed mostly online through St.FX's in-house learning management system (Moodle).

## Engineering Programming

### Combined Engineering Diploma and BSc in Three Years

In order to accommodate the preferences of a number of current students in Engineering, the proposal encourages the development of a three-year BSc Degree and Engineering Diploma combined. The proposal indicated that students who already decide to take the engineering diploma over the course of three years could benefit from this three-year BSc option.

### Combined Engineering Diploma and (Applied) Physics Degree in Four years

The proposal outlines the development of a joint Diploma of Engineering and BSc in Physics (or alternatively named Applied Physics) that students could complete in four years. Pointing to the number of who students already complete the Diploma in Engineering over three years, the option of adding only one more year to also obtain an additional BSc degree in Physics is attractive to many students. The proposal foresees that this option would attract new students, since it would be unique to the Maritime region. Even if it does not attract new students, the proposal points out that net enrolment at the university would increase, as St.FX would retain students for one to two additional years. The pathway to complete the joint program described is existing, and so the proposal does not speak to any needed investment, but rather seeks to formalize and market this option to incoming and existing students in the Diploma of Engineering program.

### Bachelor's in Engineering in Computer and Software Engineering

The Bachelor of Engineering in Computer and Software Engineering would be a four-year undergraduate degree and, according to the proposal, be the easiest Engineering degree to implement at St.FX – both in terms of financial investment and required new infrastructure. The proposal indicates that St.F.X already has several (7-10) faculty members between the Computer Science department and the Engineering departments that could teach in this new Bachelor of Engineering in Computer and Software Engineering. The proposal notes that an MSc in Computer Science is an asset to the B.Eng. in Computer and Software Engineering. The program has two possible degree patterns: a BSc in Computer Science or a B.Eng. in Computer and Software Engineering. The proposal notes an increase in net students if recruitment efforts are made abroad (specifically, China) as well as locally.

### Bachelor's in Engineering Degree at St.FX

The proposal notes that since enrolment in the Diploma in Engineering program has been steadily growing, St.FX is well suited to develop a Bachelor's of Engineering. The Bachelor's program would be developed in response to key needs identified in the immediate region: demand for more entrepreneurs, need for development in assisted living, and the development of green energy. The proposal outlines how the entrepreneurship approach could benefit from a pairing with the Schwartz School of Business. It also notes that since much of assisted living focuses on programmable devices, the program could benefit from a pairing with computer science at St.F.X, and finally, that a focus on green energy might be attractive, but risks conflicting with the program recently established at UPEI. The proposal estimates that significant cost would be associated with the development of the degree given the need for faculty and lab space. An engineering program based on computers would be the least expensive option as St.FX moves towards potentially offering a four-year degree option in Engineering.

### Bachelor's degree in Engineering and graduate degrees

Further to the proposal above, the proposal that St.FX consider implementing a graduate program following the development of the Bachelor's degree in Engineering. This would be initiated as a second phase to the development of the B.Eng., and the proposal notes that it would make attracting quality faculty a much more feasible endeavor.

### Transition Camp for Community College Engineering Graduates

Unique to the Maritimes, the proposed transition camp would provide community college graduates with the opportunity to obtain the skills and courses necessary to transfer into Engineering at St.F.X, possibly into the second year. The program would likely be offered in the summer months in the hopes that students might enroll in the fall. Formal collaboration with the colleges is currently not feasible because of wide gaps in curriculum requirements, notes the proposal, but the transition camp may be a way to offer students flexibility and as a means to attract college graduates to the engineering program at St.FX

## **General Science Programming**

### Mandatory Core Courses for All Science Degrees

The proposal aims to address a noted decline in the scientific and analytical skills that incoming science students possess. In order to address this gap, the proposal suggests the development of a multi-disciplinary science course aimed at teaching a number of important fundamental skills and a revised approach to teaching analytical thinking. The proposal also

calls for a revised consideration of Computer Science as a core introductory course for some students, as opposed to encouraging only Calculus. Computer Science may be better suited for developing fundamental skills in particular science disciplines. The proposal recommends that consultation across the science disciplines be done to establish the consequences of such an amalgamation.

## Humanities Studies Programming

### Expansion of the Humanities Colloquium

To enhance the already existing Humanities Colloquium, the proposal suggests offering a “four-course” version in addition to the three-course version already in place. Students currently take History, Philosophy, and English literature in their first year as it stands. In the “four-course” stream proposed, students would also be required to take Art History in their first year as well as the other three required courses. This is already possible, but the proposal seeks to formalize this option in order to encourage students to also take Art History.

The proposal also mentions the option of a concentration in the humanities. This option asks students to follow the pattern required in the first year of the Humanities colloquium as well as additional courses in art history and religious studies. A language requirement would be added in either French, Gaelic, Greek, Latin or Spanish.

The proposal foresees that neither of these ideas would require any additional faculty. These options would predominantly necessitate formal recognition on the part of the administration and other channels. The proposal sees this as an opportunity to offer more interdisciplinary degree pathways for students.

### Bachelor of Arts in Humanities

Building on the existing Humanities Colloquium, the proposal outlines the development of Bachelor of Arts in the Humanities. It expects that the degree would allow students to complete an honours (with or without a subsidiary), a major, a minor, a joint-major, or an advanced major. The Bachelor of Arts in the Humanities would be an interdisciplinary humanities course of study. It would draw on the structure of the Humanities Colloquium which requires students to follow the historical divisions already in place. The program would also require proficiency in a second language. The proposal outlines the need for mandatory core courses, but foresees little to no investment needed as it estimates the existing faculty complement as more than satisfactory to fulfill the course offerings needed for the degree program.

## Foundations Program

The Foundation program described seeks to find a way to develop the skills that students need to succeed in further university study. Drawing on the existing model offered at York University, the proposal suggests that students be required to take two 9-credit foundation courses (one in the social sciences and one in the humanities). These are given extra time and credit to focus on university success skills, such as essay writing, exam writing, note taking, and participating in discussions). The proposal also provides the option of including a third required course in the natural sciences. It is estimated that such a program might help retention of first year students as students are given focused attention on university skills.

## Interdisciplinary Department

In order to foster a broader interdisciplinary education, the proposal seeks to formalize interdisciplinary study through the establishment of an interdisciplinary department. The department would consist of a Chair and approximately 3 faculty members that would direct students through the program. Students of the interdisciplinary program would take courses that cut across disciplinary boundaries, but are related by a clear or unifying principle (examples include catholic studies, pre-modern studies, human health, art, and ethics). The proposal indicates that the department would offer an honours, major, and a minor program to students.

## Writing/Communications Programming

### Mandatory Academic and Critical Writing Course

The proposal calls for the implementation of a mandatory writing course for all first year students attending the university. The course would cover academic writing, referencing and citation, plagiarism, and would include an ethics component. The course may also cover topics such as: study skills, university expectations, and providing constructive feedback. The course has the aim of fostering academic engagement at the first-year level.

### Cross-disciplinary Writing Program with Certificate

The proposal outlines the development of a writing program focusing on writing practice across disciplines, which would be unique in the Maritimes. The program would include courses that could be made mandatory, with coverage tailored to the needs of different faculties and departments. The program should also offer students the opportunity to learn to write for a variety of contexts as well as provide students with critical and analytical thinking skills for democratic participation and civic engagement. The proposal also mentions the option of developing a concurrent service learning component with a focus on disciplinary or job

related writing. The idea submitted anticipates investment in the form of two full-time hires in order to help develop and run the program. A certificate could be offered to students completing the program.

### Communications and Journalism Program

The submission calls for the development of a stand-alone program in Communications and Journalism. The program would seek to prepare students for roles in radio, television, print, and computer communications, which the proposal notes are fields in demand within the workforce and community at large. The program could be affiliated with some community college programs as well. The proposal notes that a theatre arts program housed with the Communications and Journalism program is needed, but could be made to work along the Communications and Journalism program.

### Offering in Media Studies and Cultural Analysis

The proposal calls for developing offerings and potential degree patterns in Cultural Studies and (new) Media Studies to foster more student engagement, draw students to St.FX, and provide more relevant offerings to current students. The idea submitted notes the increasing popularity and contemporaneity of these topics as well as their interdisciplinary nature. The proposal mentions the possibility of attracting new students and retaining students with offerings that they will find vibrant, contemporary, attractive, and relevant. A focus that might be useful, as noted by the proposal, is the field of digital humanities, which might be worth exploring within the context of these new offerings. The proposal estimates that a new faculty member would be needed to develop and coordinate the new program.

## History / Heritage Programming

### African Nova Scotian Studies

The proposal calls for offerings in African Nova Scotian studies in response and to the Jeannine Deveau Educational Equity Endowment which was instituted this year in order to provide additional educational opportunities for members of the African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal communities. The proposal suggests looking at similar models offered at other universities and suggests that the implementation of course content could help attract African Nova Scotians to St.FX

### Canadian Studies Program

This proposal does not call for the development of a new Canadian Studies Program, but rather a revitalization of the existing Canadian Studies program, perhaps within the general umbrella of the new

Mulroney Institute of Government. The proposal only foresees a modest investment needed as the program already exists.

### Public History Program

The Public History program proposed seeks to introduce students to the field of Public History and provide them with the pre-requisite training at the undergraduate level that would make student applications to graduate programs more competitive. This program is imagined within the scope of the already existing History program, but also imagines more specific training in theory and fieldwork, which are sought after skills by senior government administrators who hire Public History graduates. In order to accommodate the latter component, the proposal mentions possible partnerships with the departments of Sociology, Anthropology, Business Administration and History.

### Minor and Honours Subsidiary in Premodern Studies

The proposal aims to absorb and expand the existing Minor in Classics under the umbrella of a Minor in Premodern Studies. The minor would formalize a pattern between already existing courses at St.FX and allow students who are already drawn by an interest in premodern studies to formalize their degree pattern. The proposal estimates that this could benefit and be of interest for approximately 15-20 students a year. A modest financial investment is forecasted for the program budget. The program budget would be dedicated to bringing in guest speakers and associated costs. The proposal notes that faculty and course complements are existing at St.FX

## **Philosophy and Political Science Programming**

### Concentration in Ethics, Law, and Governance

The proposal suggests the development of a concentration in Ethics, Law, and Governance for students who wish to pursue a career in law or related fields (such as public service, policy consulting, and lobbying). The proposal suggests using existing degree patterns in Philosophy and Political Science. The concentration would be a designation on graduating students' degree who take a pre-determined set of courses within these two departments.



## **Social Sciences Programming**

### **Social Work Offerings**

The proposal asks the university to consider offering Social Work courses or programming for students interested in working in social services fields in the future. Noting a growth in these sectors, the proposal estimates that students would be better placed for either applying to social work programs or to participate in the community directly. Offerings pertaining to social work should cover topics such as critical thinking, history of social work, and social work skills. These courses could strengthen resumes and enhance applications to Schools of Social Work as well as prepare students to work in various social services positions.

### **IDS Experiential Learning Abroad Course**

An IDS course, cross-listed across faculties, will combine the pedagogies of immersion and course-based service learning. The 8-week summer course will be held in Ghana or Guatemala. Students will attend classes taught by their St.FX faculty leader, supplemented with field trips and talks from local resource people. Students will also do service learning in local placements to support the community and apply and integrate the learning from classes, field trips, and talks. The course will focus on the social, political, historical development, and/or economic issues facing the community in which the group will be living and working, and the ways in which community members are meeting the challenges that face them. The proposal foresees a needed investment of approximately 8000\$ to cover the expenses of a faculty leader and to cover the salary of a service learning staff member.

## **Business Programming**

### **Graduate Diploma in Business Program**

The proposed Graduate Diploma in Business would be aimed as a supplementary program for recent graduates from Arts and Science programs. Students who recently graduated with either degree could take courses in business to obtain the diploma as a stand-alone credential or as a pathway towards obtaining an accelerated BBA. Comparable programs exist, but are rare. The proposal notes that Queen's offers a similar diploma during the summer months. The proposal notes that benefits derived from this program include retaining recent graduates for additional education as well greater utilization of living and dining facilities on campus throughout the year.

### MBA in International Development

The proposal outlines the plan for an MBA program offered in collaboration with the Schwartz Business School, the Coady International Institute, and the Economics department. Noting that this MBA would distinguish itself from most MBAs in that the focus of the proposed degree would be on skills needed for international development work, this program would fit within St.FX's mission. It would do so by linking traditional development workers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to finance, accounting, management, and other traditional sub-disciplines typically understood to be part of Business.

### Financial Literacy Certificate Program

This proposal suggests the development of a non-credit financial literacy certificate course for all students, with the possibility of expansion to target the greater St.FX community as an audience in the future. The course would include three levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The initiative would rely in part on the participation of Schwartz business students who would be trained to deliver the courses to the participants.

### Certificate in Organizational Leadership

The Certificate in Organization Leadership is imagined as a co-curricular program bringing students together from a variety of degree streams to study interdisciplinary approaches to leadership knowledge, interact with leaders, practice their own leadership through experiential learning and reflect on the kind of leader they are and wish to become. Students will graduate with both their undergraduate Degree and Certificate. Main tenants of the certificate include: both reflective and experiential learning opportunities; that any undergraduate student would be allowed to apply for the Certificate, subject to their selection through an application and adjudication process; that the completion of the certificate would take two years, commencing in the student's third year of study, and requiring the completion of one seminar per semester; and that students will enter into and complete the program in a cohort. The certificate would require students to take four non-credit seminar courses throughout a two-year period. The proposal foresees a needed investment of 7,950\$.

## ENHANCING STUDENT ACADEMICS

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### Academic Engagement

The proposal outlines various ways by which students could be incentivized into prioritizing their academic success. The author suggests that by encouraging students to apply their academic understanding to everyday life, they become better students academically. Engagement can be encouraged by tying it to some aspect of a student's transcript/GPA, including an academic component to the house cup points system already in place in residence, or developing courses that have the specific aim of engaging with academics outside of the classroom. The proposal also suggests that students could be given a list of academic activities worthy of credit, such as visiting and learning about academic advising, participating in academic workshops or reflection events. The proposal notes that this would hopefully translate into higher-quality academics and an overall improvement in the caliber of students at the university.

### Engaging Undergraduate Students in Research

The proposal speaks to the benefits both students and faculty can derive from entering into research partnerships. Undergraduate students can be employed as research assistants or unpaid volunteers. Students would benefit from experiential learning in their field of study whereas faculty may be better placed to maintain their research programs.

### Encouraging Flexibility in the Liberal Arts

The proposal invites St.FX to consider flexibility and breadth in its degree pattern offerings. The proposal points to the ways in which current program offerings are far too rigid and prescriptive for a school that prides itself in being a liberal arts institution. There should be an effort to remove internal pressures encouraging honours degrees, and instead cater towards students who want university to work as an opportunity to dabble in a variety of cross-disciplinary interests and allow for things like self-designed degree patterns. The proposal notes that many arts students do not take sciences, but there should be a mechanism to encourage this. In order to achieve this, the proposal does not anticipate a financial cost associated.

### Implications of New (first-year) ENSC Course / Lab Delivery Modification

The proposal outlines concerns about the way in which students are able to choose science courses in their first year and the implications it has on students' degree patterns in the future. The case is made that that students are already advised against taking too many sciences in their first years because of the workload that accompanies such a commitment, particularly in respect to lab requirements. The concern is that students are unable to take an

appropriate breadth of science courses in their first year, and so are unwittingly restricting their degree patterns in the future. The proposal calls for a requirement of 2 labs a week in the first year regardless of the number of science courses for which the student registers. Which labs the students attend would be, within reason, up to the student's discretion. Each science program can require the participation in a specific number of labs as a pre-requisite in order to be a part of that program. Courses where lab requirements are not met can be counted as science electives. This allows students to undertake a rigorous science degree without limiting their prospects in any given program too early in their academic career.

### Geoinformatics Centre

In anticipation of the coming demand for geographic information systems knowledge across Geography and Earth Sciences, the proposal calls for both the implementation of a GIS program and a GIS resource centre. The proposal claims that there is a demand among faculty and students for help in manipulating special data for research and study. The proposal states that a GIS centre would allow St.FX to remain competitive within the Maritimes as an institution retaining students in Geoinformatics. The GIS certificate or program could prove to be a marketable/employable skill for graduates will soon be a necessity in the information economy. The proposal foresees that most of the financial investment required to set up and maintain the centre can be shared between St.FX and the town of Antigonish. Preliminary talks with the town have proven fruitful, since the town indicated that it needs a GIS technician, but is unable to afford one, so it would be interested in partnering with St.FX and could contribute financial assistance in exchange for help in their data management. Similar partnerships could be made with various local organizations.

### Rooftop Garden

As a means of delivering practical ecology-related educational programming at St.F.X, the Rooftop Garden is envisioned as a living lab. The rooftop garden would necessitate (in its current vision) including a large deck with intensive raised-bed gardens, a rainwater harvesting system, a composting system, a solar thermal power unit, bee hives, a sustainable agricultural library, and a rooftop kitchen pavilion with space for lab-style teaching. This proposal suggests that the rooftop garden would establish St.FX as a flagship in the area of biodynamic/sustainable gardening in the Atlantic Provinces. Investment is needed in order to build and maintain the facilities.

### 4H at St.FX

The proposal suggests that a partnership between 4-H Canada and St.FX would be a natural fit because of both organizations' commitment to community development. This partnership would engage St.FX students with the local community participants of 4-H in order

to help with skills development. One means of establishing a partnership might be through having students volunteer as junior leaders in their area of interest or expertise to groups of 4-H participants. The proposal leaves open the option of creating partnerships imagined differently.

#### Funding for Field Trips that Integrate Different Courses Within and Across Disciplines

The proposal suggests funding should be made available to departments and programs wishing to develop field trips in order to expose students to practical applications of the ideas they have learned in the classroom. These field trips would integrate different courses within and across disciplines. Students in participating classes would work in groups doing a series of course-specific projects involving various museums or cultural venues they have visited. The proposal sees the opportunity for collaboration between departments and programs sharing common themes.

#### Nursing Exchange Program with Kenya

The submission calls for an inquiry into the feasibility of an exchange program for Nursing students in Kenya. It mentions that an attempt to establish an exchange program in the past was made, but it was unsuccessful. It is suggested that the timing might be right to reinvestigate this opportunity.

#### Improve Access to the Tramble Rooms

The submission suggests that more could be done to help students access academic success aids and counselling. It notes that inefficient procedures in the Tramble rooms may cause certain students to leave the university altogether. To improve access to essential services offered through the Tramble rooms: professors be allowed to recommend and refer students directly, develop flexible scheduled programming and services tailored to individual needs, and look into means of providing funding opportunities to assist with the costs of assessment and diagnosis.

#### Expand Summer and Spring Course Offerings for BSc/BScN/BScHkin

The proposal aims to address a shortage of courses for science students in the summer months. As it stands, students who may want to complete their degrees at an accelerated pace or take a reduced workload in future years are either unable to do because of the lack of options offered at St.FX. Alternatively, they may be required to look at other institutions' offerings to fill their requirements at their desired pace. In order to provide students with more flexibility, the proposal asks that more courses be added to the offerings.

### Atlantic Provinces Degree (Eastern Deans' Agreement)

The concept allows students from universities in the Maritimes to take courses at various institutions throughout the region while obtaining their degree at their home institution. Students would complete 50%+ of their coursework at their home institution, but would have access to a more vast selection of courses by being able to take courses at different universities. Students would pay tuition at their home university even while attending another school in the Maritimes.

### Transfer Agreements for Engineering Diploma students

Currently, the only agreement that exists for students continuing their degree in engineering after completing the diploma program is with Dalhousie University. The proposal notes that formalizing arrangements with other schools could benefit St.FX students and may provide leverage for negotiating with Dalhousie. This would be equally important if St.FX developed a Bachelor's program that might not offer all common disciplines in Engineering.

### Exchange program with MTA in Modern and Contemporary Art

The proposal identifies a possible complementary relationship between the Art History program at Mount Allison University and St.FX. Since Mount Allison University's offerings in Art History are predominantly in Ancient Art, nineteenth century, modern, and contemporary art, and St.FX's offering are predominantly in medieval through the Baroque period, the two programs could develop an exchange that would allow students of Art History to gain coverage of significant historical breadth.

### Open Access (OA)

The proposal speaks to the ways in which Open Access is an established means for research to be made available to all. There is a noted parallel between Open Access' mission of spreading knowledge and access to information with much of St.FX's legacy. The proposal suggests adopting an Open Access mandate, funding an institutional repository for St.FX, supporting the *Knowledge Unlatched* initiative, adequately supporting St.FX's implementation of *Open Journal Systems*, Re-launch the dormant St.FX press, and becoming a member of the *Open Library of the Humanities*.

### Employ a Registered Dietician on Campus

In response to the quality of life survey, the proposal suggests hiring a dietician on campus. This is envisioned to help faculty, staff, and students achieve better work-life balance. Employing the services of a dietician would also support student health, especially with respect to mental health and unhealthy eating behaviours. Hiring a dietician, especially a sports dietician, could be an asset to further developing the IDI program already established in the

Human Nutrition department. It is estimated this would attract more students to St.FX and that this would increase the number of Human Kinetics students who take Human Nutrition as a minor.

## FACULTY RESOURCES

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### Plagiarism Software

In order to discourage plagiarism and help students recognize the nature of plagiarism, as well as how it hinders critical thinking and writing, the proposal calls for an investment in plagiarism software. It indicates that this software would encourage students to be more attentive. This would increase academic engagement as well as strengthen existing programs.

### Create a Teaching and Learning Centre

The Centre for Teaching and learning is imagined as a centre that would provide ongoing pedagogical support to instructors who want to perform better in the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to, training on using the classrooms in the new Mulroney Institute of Government once the renovations are complete. The proposal also includes suggesting the inclusion of resources on course (re)design, development of a teaching portfolio, and collaborative learning strategies. The proposal estimates that investment would be needed to hire dedicated staff for the centre.



## NEW VISIONS

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### BSc Minor, Major, Honours

The submission outlines a current gap in degree offerings. Students in the BSc Major program need to take fewer courses in order to have a recognized minor than students who are in the BSc Honours or Advanced Major program. The proposal calls for a uniform amount of needed credits in order to have a formally designated minor across the major, advanced major, and honours streams. There should also be a degree pattern that would allow students in the advanced major and honours streams to also be able to complete joint major degrees as well.

### Faculty of Health Sciences

With the development of the programs in health sciences and health studies mentioned in the early parts of this document, the proposal submitted suggests the eventual development of a Faculty of Health Sciences that would focus on interdisciplinary and collaborative learning with the participation of faculty from Human Kinetics, Human Nutrition, and Nursing.

### Divorce Departments from Programs

Pointing to the inefficiencies that running programs through departments cause, the proposal suggests managing programs via coordinators. Coordinators could be tasked to oversee multiple programs simultaneously and supervise the students in each program. Students would not belong to departments, but rather to programs, whereas staff would belong to a department. The divorced structure can be better supported with an increased emphasis on cross-listed courses and cross-appointed faculty. Program coordinators may drive programmatic change and represent programmatic needs in hiring decisions whereas departments might speak more to the terms of disciplinary research needs. The divorced structure is said in the proposal to better foster modern interdisciplinary studies and cater towards students' needs more efficiently and effectively.

### Restructuring Departments

The proposal calls for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the university departments as they stand. Maintaining the general departmental model, the proposal suggests that an evaluation of each department individually should be considered, including whether some departments should be separated or combined with other departments. The proposal also recommends speaking to members of departments whose allegiances lay elsewhere. Some reshuffling of staff may help create a more cohesive and cooperative atmosphere as people who feel as though they are in the right unit may perform better.

## Class Scheduling

The proposal outlines an alternative to the current scheduling system at St.FX in the hopes of fixing inefficiencies in the current system (including underused Fridays, dead times between classes, and conflict between different formats). The proposal suggests that 50 and 75 minute classes alternate days in a three week cycle. The first week would hold 75 minute classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, whereas 50 minute classes would be held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. During the second week of the rotation, 75 minute classes would be held on Wednesdays and Friday, whereas 50 minute classes would be held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursday. Finally on the third week of the rotation, 75 minute classes would be held on Mondays and Wednesdays, whereas 50 minute classes would be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The proposal indicates that this more efficient scheduling would better balance workload across the week and reduce preferential scheduling strategies that make the current system inefficient.

## Encourage co-teaching between instructors from different department / faculties in courses that cross disciplines

This proposal notes that a greater level of collaboration between different departments and faculties would strengthen programs, create new academic initiatives, and improve students' academic experience at St.FX. The proposal notes that many courses touch on topics that require an interdisciplinary understanding. Encouraging co-teaching can enhance the quality of the course, the interest, and also help with teaching loads. The proposal notes that, given the additional required planning and course alignment, there should be a mechanism to encourage instructors to initiate the process themselves.

## Renewing and expanding contacts with high schools, former students, and their employers

The proposal suggests conducting a review of former students' success after their Physics degree at St.FX. The goal would be to obtain information which could then be translated into guidance on how to programs and courses should evolve in the future. The proposal also notes that an inquiry to high school guidance counsellors on what type of information is needed to support them as they advise students on their options in science, and physics in particular.

## Compassionate Global Citizenship

The proposal seeks, through ten different suggestions, to establish a culture of conscious compassion and kindness. The proposal suggests a series of monthly roundtable lunches on the topic, officially affiliating with the Charter for Compassion, creating a network between student societies that are organized around the theme of compassion and

mindfulness (such as the vegetarian and yoga societies), create an annual Compassionate Global Citizenship Award, create a film series on the theme of compassionate global citizenship, cross-faculty supported lecture series, create an advertising campaign on the existing compassionate global citizenship aspects of campus, offer social development training and skills from the Coady International Institute to the campus community, stronger cross-campus work on food security, and create a focus on mindfulness practice across the campus community.

#### Uphold and Demonstrate the University's Commitment to Social Justice

The proposal notes that in order to tangibly demonstrate St.FX's commitment to social justice, there are some immediate steps the school can take. The school should consider creating and formally adopting a statement which acknowledges that the university is on Mi'kmaw territory, develop guidelines for recognizing and representing Mi'kmaw at all ceremonial events, formally recognize October as Mi'kmaw History month, develop presentations on the history of Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian communities to be included in staff, faculty, and student orientation packages, identify and accommodate specific needs of Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian students, and identify alumni who are African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal who could help with recruiting.