

The University, recognizing the changing environment of teaching and learning in Nova Scotia, and recognizing the changing enrollment patterns of students attending St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), proposes a Presidential Task Force to identify and recommend avenues for sustaining the academic priorities of the University 2013-2018.

The following structure is advanced in accordance with the motions passed at the March 2013 Board of Governors' meeting.

President's Task Force on Program Prioritization

In the Academic Priorities Planning process undertaken by the Academic VP, Associate VP Research, Deans, University Librarian and Department Chairs & Coordinators in 2010, the following guiding principles were identified for StFX's future:

1. St. F.X. is a small, high quality, primarily undergraduate, residential university.
2. At St. F.X. we recognize a mutual dependence and cooperation between the traditional arts and science disciplines, on the one hand, and the professional disciplines, on the other. Professional disciplines are grounded in the theoretical bases of arts and science disciplines, and an undergraduate education that prepares its graduates for leadership and service requires the focus of professional programs. Undergraduate enrolment should be distributed among these areas.
3. St. F.X. is a community of scholars: faculty and students share an intellectual life and common project. This means that the twin goals of teaching and research must be kept in a careful balance: teaching must be informed by active research, and research must be pursued with a view to our teaching mission.
4. St. F.X., from its foundation to serve the needs of the diocese of Antigonish, has always had a mission for service. Our graduates, it is hoped, will be prepared for and will wish to serve various communities, locally, nationally, and globally.
5. St. F.X. is home to graduate programs in certain niche areas that reflect, in some cases, the outreach mission of the University, and in others the research needs of certain disciplines.

These principles may serve as touchstones for the current process.

The President's Task Force shall have the responsibility of identifying priorities to support the strategic direction for StFX as a nationally recognized, high quality, mainly undergraduate institution with graduate programs in key strategic areas.

The process is intended to determine how best to approach the allocation of resources for the future sustainability and advancement of StFX. All dimensions of the University, both academic and non-academic, including administrative groups, shall be the subject of assessment to determine if the units or groups are of the appropriate configuration, size, and quality to serve best the goals of the University. What programs or units, academic or non-academic, administrative or non-administrative, should be sustained, enhanced, revised, or phased out?

The Task Force shall be composed of members of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APP) as its core group. However, the President will not sit on this Task Force. For the information for the Board of Governors, the membership of the Academic Priorities and Planning Committee is:

President of the University
Academic Vice-President (Chair)
Deans of the four Faculties
Vice President Recruitment and Student Experience
Student's Union Vice-President or his/her designate
University Librarian
Six members elected by Senate - four faculty Senators and two student Senators

Further members of the Task Force will be Associate Vice-President Research, Chair of General Faculty, Secretary of Senate, Chairs of the four Faculties, Director of Student Life, Student Chair of the Quality of Life Committee, Director of Athletics, Director of Finance, Registrar, and the Director of Continuing Education.

The Academic Vice-President & Provost (AVP) will Chair the Committee and oversee the Program Prioritization process. The Committee may decide to form sub-committees or working groups to address various elements. The AVP will make regular progress reports to the Senate, Board of Governors and other appropriate University bodies, beginning in early October 2013.

The Task Force will develop criteria for assessment of both academic and non-academic programs. Recognizing that different groupings of programs and offices have different roles within the University, the Committee may develop different sets of criteria for different groups of programs. The Task Force (27 members) shall have access to all relevant enrollment, engagement, and resource data available from the Registrar, Student Services and from Finance

and any applicable data available in Departments and units, and shall investigate all aspects of the University's functioning under the following headings:

- Quality of program inputs and processes
- Quality of program outcomes
- External demand for the program or unit
- Internal demand for the program of unit
- Size, scope and productivity of the program
- Revenue and other resources generated
- Costs and other resources involved
- Impact justification and overall essential nature of the program
- Opportunities analysis

(Note: These objectives are consistent with those identified in other Universities' priorities reviews, and are derived from some of those named by Robert C. Dickeson in *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance*.)

Extensive consultation and periodic "townhalls" shall be undertaken with the University Community by the Task Force in its initial stages, and the data shall be compiled and formulated to a final draft. The consultation format and style shall be determined by the Task Force.

Following its consultative process the Task Force shall identify specific and measurable goals for the University. These goals will be consistent with the mandate of St. Francis Xavier University.

Recommendations may be made to Senate with respect to any relevant non-academic programs. Matters relating to all academic units' and programs' positioning shall be referred by Senate to APP for consideration and re-proposed to Senate by APP. Recommendations regarding non-academic programs that are not under the jurisdiction of Senate shall be referred to the Board of Governors. It is understood that such recommendations would focus on achieving a sustainable model for the StFX of the future, and may involve expansion, reduction, or consolidation of existing/current programs or units, the addition of new programs or units, or the elimination of programs or units.

The Committee shall submit its final report to the President no later than June 30th, 2014.

Note: The Report of the Task Force is received by the President, who after discussion with the Task Force, refers any academic recommendations to the Senate, which in turn refers them to the Academic Planning & Priorities Committee for eventual re-proposal (if accepted) to Senate. The non-academic changes shall be referred by the President to the Board either for support of decisions or for consideration/acceptance of recommendations.