



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT

Diversity Engagement Team

2020-2021





A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically underscored equity and justice challenges worldwide and at home. 2020-2021 ushered in the Black Lives Matter movement, settler/colonizer disputes regarding the Mi'kmaq fishing industry, and surfaced campus issues around anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, and anti-Queer and Trans bias. The Diversity Engagement Team (DET) was pivotal in supporting Black, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ Xaverians through these many challenges.

This year saw significant milestones towards creating a culture of belonging and safety at StFX with the opening of two new student centres, the development of anti-racism modules, chosen name options for students, and a completely redesigned harassment and discrimination policy.

The upcoming academic year will provide more opportunities for StFX to learn and to grow in our pursuit of a welcoming and inclusive environment. The Diversity Engagement Team will be at the forefront, supporting students and providing resources to support all Xaverians.

CHANGING CULTURE



Campus-Wide Initiatives

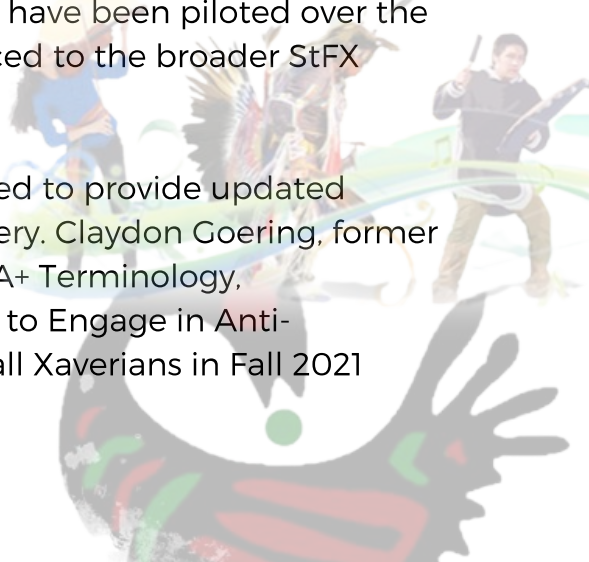
CHOSEN NAME POLICY

This year, the GSDA in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar, IT Services, and the Manager of Human Rights and Equity, began the process of updating information systems across campus to increase accessibility for transgender and gender non-conforming students at StfX. The updates that occurred this year make it possible for students to update their class lists, student ID card, and email address to reflect their name in use, rather than their legal name. This update decreases barriers that some transgender and gender non-conforming people face when socially transitioning, such as the financial burden of updating legal documents, dead-naming, and being outed as transgender or gender non-conforming. Over the next 4 years, more updates will be made to high- and low-priority information systems across campus to ensure seamless updating of students' records, eliminating barriers to socially transitioning at St. FX.

ANTI-RACISM AND POSITIVE SPACE MODULES

With Support from a stipend from the Canada Research Chairs Program and the StFX Research office, the DET welcomed Robert Upshaw to the team. With over 35 years experience in anti-racism education, Robert partnered with Advisors to develop a series of modules for the university. The first module, designed to provide participants with a basic foundation in anti-racism work, is currently being developed as a self-guided, asynchronous learning opportunity. This module lays the groundwork for the synchronous anti-black racism and anti-indigenous racism modules. There are two specialized modules: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Hiring Process must be completed by all AUT hiring committees. and Anti-racism Principles in Research is for those who wish to develop more inclusive practices. These modules have been piloted over the course of the year and are scheduled to be introduced to the broader StFX community Fall 2021.

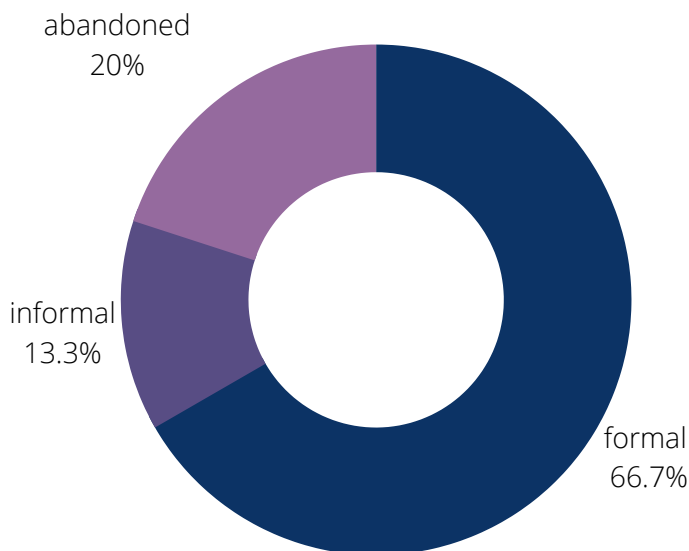
The Positive Space Program is also being restructured to provide updated content and greater internal consistency in its delivery. Claydon Goering, former GSDA, is developing three new modules: 2SLGBTQIA+ Terminology, Contextualizing Privilege and Oppression and Tools to Engage in Anti-Oppression Work. This training will be available for all Xaverians in Fall 2021



CHANGES TO THE HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

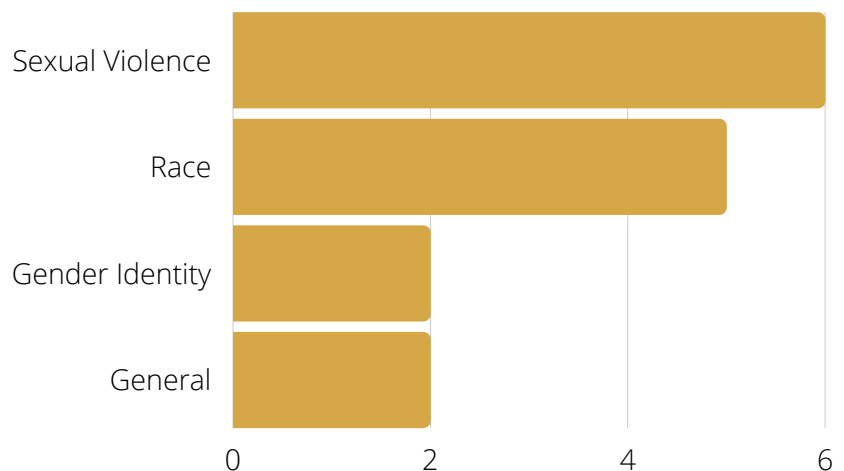
On May 1, 2021 a new harassment and discrimination policy was brought into effect. The new policy, based on the best practices of StFX's cutting edge sexual violence policy, replaces the 12 year old policy formerly in place. The new policy is founded on the principals of procedural fairness,, and choice for the Reporting party. The new policy also hopes to shorten timelines for resolution, with the goal of completing investigations within a 30 day window (versus potential 60+ days with the 2009 Policy)

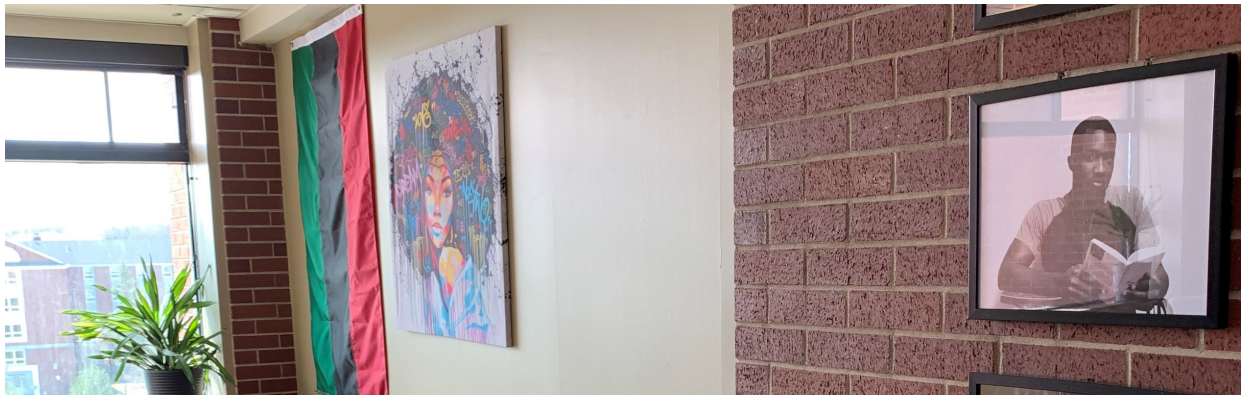
SUPPORTING XAVERIANS Complaint Resolution



From September 1, 2020 May 27, 2021 there have been 10 formal investigations. Two complaints were resolved informally. three concerns were not pursued by complainants

Complaints centered on three main themes: sexual violence, race and gender identity. Two complaints concerned general harassment outside of the prohibited grounds for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act





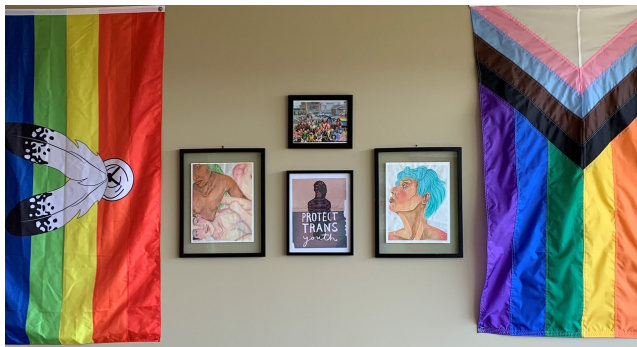
SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Kiknu & the Diversity Engagement Centre

Meaning 'our home' in English, the Kiknu Indigenous Student Centre is a safe space for Indigenous students and their families. Officially opened in 2021, The centre fosters an environment that promotes friendship and the journey toward reconciliation, while supporting Indigenous student success and overall wellbeing.

The Kiknu Indigenous Student Centre is located in Coady West room 104 and is home to the Indigenous Student Advisor (ISA), StFX's Elder in Residence and Indigenous Faculty.

The Diversity Engagement Centre is located at 435 Bloomfield Centre and is home to the Black Student Advisor and the Gender & Sexual Diversity Advisor. The centre unofficially opened in October 2020 and has been a place for students to study and create, to grab a healthy snack on offer or to simply hang out with their peers in a place of cultural affirmation.



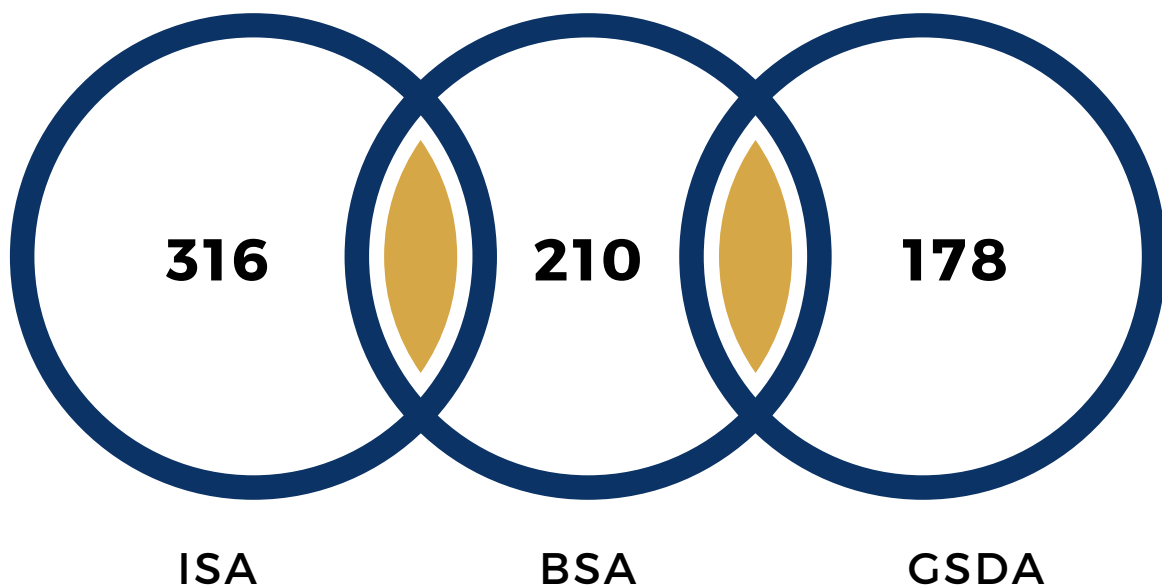
Advising Office Visits

Whenever possible, Advisors provided in-person office supports that adhered to StFX's safety standards throughout the academic year. Students visit for a multitude of reasons, and advisors routinely provide the following services:

- providing information, tools and resources, to help students thrive
- advising on equity rights
- assisting with financial supports through the Deveau fund
- providing gender affirming gear
- referrals to internal and external organizations and services
- provide a place of cultural support and safety

The Advisors also work to engage and support a caseload of students to provide proactive outreach to students to ensure that students who require more supports excel during their time at StFX.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Advisors had a total of **704 student office visits**.



The figure above represents the number of in-person office visits to each advising office. Because of the intersecting identities of many of our students, some students choose to receive supports from multiple offices.

“Before finding the GSDA’s office, I didn’t feel like there was a space I could just wander to on campus - now I have a space! Thank you!”

-1st year Xaverian

CELEBRATING CULTURE

Events

The Advising offices provide opportunities for Xaverians to celebrate Indigenous, Black, Queer and Trans existence and contributions at StFX. These celebrations also educate the general campus on issues facing the respective communities. This year, events included:

- Pride month flag raising
- Pride pin beading
- 2SLGBTQIA+ Spaces: Tattooing
- Get ready with Richard (Drag queen make-up tutorial)
- Sex toy bingo
- trans day of remembrance vigil
- Venus Envy sex-ed workshop
- Spill the tea: labels
- Pride button making
- Pride online concert
- African Heritage flag raising
- AFM: Spiritual wellbeing
- Dads against double standards (addressing negative stereotypes placed on black fathers)



780

Individuals participated in events hosted/co-hosted by advising offices.

6500 individuals were reached through the 24 social media campaigns undertaken by the GSDA office

Videos from the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women produced by the Manager of Human Rights and Equity and the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Advocate received **8300** views

- Black health matters: Robert Wright
- ISANS: Hope: Understanding "Others" amongst ourselves
- Treaty Day celebrations
- Orange shirt day campaign
- Mi'kmaw History and Culture with Gerald Gloade
- Craft/art therapy nights
- Student circles
- Research Bingo
- Planting the seeds session (upper year students met with lower year, to promote pride, advocacy and resiliency)
- Rebecca Thomas virtual viewing session
- Kiknu movie nights (Indian Horse and Brother, I cry)

CREATING BELONGING

Education

439

Faculty, students and staff attended education sessions hosted by Advisors and the Human Rights and Equity Manager.

Providing educational opportunities is a core function of the advising team. This year, the team offered the following educational opportunities for students, faculty and staff:

- University 101 information sessions for incoming Indigenous students
- Learning Lodge-Mi'kmaw Lively hood
- Scholarship/Bursary Support sessions
- Deveau Scholars Day-Recruitment session
- Isolation Kits
- Wednesday Webinar-Mi'kmaw History Month
- Equity Diversity and Inclusion in the Hiring Process
- Treaty Day Learning Lodge
- **Kairos Blanket exercise**
- Spring Faculty Retreat: "Coming together to learn together: decolonizing/Indigenizing the Academy"
- **Positive Space Training**

What is the Kairos Blanket Exercise?

Developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and educators, the KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive and experiential teaching tool that explores the historic and contemporary relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the land we now know as Canada.

What is Positive Space Training?

The Positive Space Program is intended to create and identify respectful, supportive and safe learning and working environments for two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (2SLGBTQIA+) students, employees and community members, as well as for their allies and people researching 2SLGBTQIA issues.

The "+" sign is used to note that sexual and gender diversity is much broader than can be captured in an acronym, so the symbol is intended to signify inclusion of all genders, sexual orientations and sexes in the rainbow galaxy



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Anti-Racism Education
Diversity Engagement Centre

The Diversity Engagement Team would like to thank the many individuals and departments for their contributions and support in making 2020-2021 a successful year for equity and belonging at StFX. We are stronger together.