

**Online Preparedness Task Force
Ongoing Academic Support Working Group**

Informal Learning

Recommendation: Formal attempts should be made by multiple units in the University to ensure that students continue to have the opportunity for informal interactions with their peers.

Rationale: Students should have the opportunity to interact with other students through online platforms, inside and outside of the classroom, in order to start building their social network and engage with the Xaverian spirit that StFX is so well known for. These opportunities will allow students to support each other from a distance, ease the transition when students are able to come to campus, and allow for greater knowledge mobilization through peer to peer information sharing.

These informal networks could be established through faculty organized partnering in the classroom, residence communities, student societies, and different service/support units within the university. The opportunity to interact with senior students or students of a similar profile will be of particular importance to first generation students, international students, and students who identify in specific groups (e.g. LGBTQ, African descent, Aboriginal).

What's next?

1. Consult with VP's, Deans, Department Chairs, and the Students' Union to explore and encourage opportunities to create these informal learning environments.
2. Consider the development of a PD session on how to best engage learners in the online environment with a focus on informal learning opportunities.
3. Actively publicize these opportunities to both StFX students and the community.

Recommendation: The resource document found in Appendix A should be made easily accessible to the entire campus community.

Rationale: Learning what supports are available and where to find them is sometimes difficult at the best of times and perhaps even more so in an online environment. Providing improved access to this material/information enhances the student experience and reduces staff and faculty pressure in helping students navigate on campus support networks and opportunities.

What's next?

1. Forward the updated document to the Communications Department with a request that an easy-to-find website be developed with all these details to ensure easy access for both faculty and students as to what services are available and from whom.