

**Remarks By  
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**HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS  
SERIES  
THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2018  
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SCHOONER ROOM, CASINO NOVA SCOTIA**

**Check against delivery**

I, too, wish to add my thanks to Patrick Sullivan and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and our sponsors Stewart McKelvey for hosting us this afternoon.

Before I begin, I want to emphasize that I am going to use StFX as the proxy for all of the universities in the province. Of course, the numbers and examples that I am about to share can relate more closely to our more rural institutions – like Acadia ... or CBU... but they can easily be extrapolated and imagined for any and every institution within the province, based rurally or within metro Halifax.

So where do we begin....

To remind you, StFX is a small institution of approximately 4,000 students, nestled within a town of approximately 5,000 residents.

Now some may be surprised to hear me say this, but we, in effect, operate a large business within the province of Nova Scotia. And like all large-scale businesses, we set goals for ourselves and are becoming better at measuring our efforts to ensure we are spending dollars wisely.

As such, last year we commissioned an economic impact study for the university with the goal to ultimately understand how the activities of the university contribute to the economic wellbeing of our communities.

To be clear, the study was focused on the economic impact, and is not a deep dive on the social impact of the university. Having said, I would argue that our academic and educational ‘value’ or benefit continues to be crystal clear to anyone who has the opportunity to meet or work with someone who wears the X-ring. They will tell you about the quality of professors or their time spent studying in The Hall of The Clans.... essentially conveying the transformative nature of StFX.

But the reason I am here today is to talk more about the economic realities StFX brings to you, to us – the impact that is both created and distributed to people within our communities.... within our businesses. Your business.

The data shows that ours is an economic success story, not just for Antigonish, but for the entire northeastern region of Nova Scotia – a region that has seen its fair share of economic challenges and outmigration, as the glory days of a once-booming natural resources industry diminished over time.

Full disclosure: the numbers I am about to share may contain a little overlap with some of the numbers my colleague Dianne has reported. For example, StFX has international students that would likely have been part of her reporting. But in reality, there won't be much overlap given our different focal points. Ours is an in-depth look at StFX's contribution specifically.

To put it bluntly, St. Francis Xavier University contributed nearly a half-billion dollars to the provincial economy in 2016 – 17. Over \$481 million to be exact. To put that into perspective, if we use earnings data from Statistics Canada, that's the equivalent of 10,917 average full-time Nova Scotian jobs.

I'm just going to let that sink in for a second.... StFX... a small university in northeastern Nova Scotia generates enough annual economic value to fulfill nearly 11,000 full-time jobs.

### **Impacts:**

**DIRECT SPEND: \$150 M**

Nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> or \$150 million of that overall figure can be traced back to direct spending in the region. That is:

- Students contributing over \$13 million in buying coffee, eating at a local restaurant, having computers repaired or in local entertainment.
- Over \$32 million was generated by visitors to the university needing local accommodations, meals, taxis, buses, sightseeing and other tourism activities.
- And, perhaps the most obvious example, StFX added over \$104 million in wages, services and benefits to employees. Wages that buy groceries, contribute to our health care... support our local businesses...

...all spurring activity and growth, creating an economic stability and the conditions for job creation within our region.

## CREATING BETTER WAGES: \$245 M

Our universities not only support a stable environment for job creation, the data from the report shows we graduate better employees – who, because of the quality of education and value of experience gained, progress in their careers to receive what we call an ‘Earnings Premium.’

In StFX’s case, we have approximately 12,600 alumni within the province. Their accumulated knowledge, skills and techniques developed at StFX provide a foundation for a better-educated workforce. According to the report our alumni will earn nearly \$250 million more in wages within a year than workers without a bachelor’s degree. This is good for us all -- as more money circulates within our system, it’s safe to assume more is spent supporting our local businesses.

## RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE IMPACT- \$85M

A fundamental part of the university’s role within the community is research. Through collaboration and working with the community, together we are able to create, exchange and support knowledge, further advancing economic opportunities to the tune of approximately \$85 million within the region. Whether it’s developing antifouling paint to assist local fishermen or studying the health impacts of motor skill development in children, the research that occurs on our campus benefits our communities. As StFX continues to enhance its research position among Canadian institutions, we have seen a marked improvement in attracting the best and brightest minds to Antigonish, located in rural Nova Scotia.

Other:

But what’s not specifically shown here, are the dots that connect us directly back to some of the goals and priorities outlined in the *One Nova Scotia Report*, some of the points Dianne spoke about. For example:

- StFX attracts half of its student population from outside of this great province. That’s not a projection or an aspiration... it is a fact. We, like other institutions in the province, are a beacon for a new population. Young, enthusiastic minds who believe they can change the world. The onus is on us, collectively, to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep them here in this province.
- Or, our collective focus on improving access to a quality education for marginalized groups. For example, I am very proud to report that just a couple of weeks ago we received another \$1M, this time through the generosity of the John and Judy Bragg Family Foundation and the Jeannine Deveau Educational Equity Foundation. With these two gifts, we have now raised over \$7 million for scholarships and bursaries for Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian students. These new financial awards will open the pathway to a quality education regardless of a student’s financial background. I am so pleased to say through this

fund, more than 120 students have already been able to access the highest quality education at StFX.

But we can't do this alone.

Just as the university is an economic driver, you, representatives of the business sector within this wonderful province.... It is imperative that we work together... that we support one another.

Earlier I mentioned that StFX was a success story, and that is true. But I feel compelled to reinforce that it only remains a success story within the province as long as we, collectively, see and understand the value that the university brings to you... to us all... the people and businesses within our province.

*The One Nova Scotia Report* challenges us all to 'aim for profound change.' Looking at the 19 goals laid out in *The One Nova Scotia Report*, I can honestly say that universities are directly linked and are critical to the success of over half the goals presented.

It is with this in mind that I encourage you to reach out to me... to us... to understand the opportunities for collaboration... get involved... support students.

I want to leave you with just two more numbers and a closing statement if I may... and if you leave remembering only a few things from my remarks this afternoon, please remember this:

1. For every \$1 SPENT by StFX, the province gains \$7.
2. For every \$1 INVESTED in StFX, \$15 is GENERATED in return.
3. If we need further evidence of impact – you simply don't have to look farther than the towns of Antigonish and Wolfville (for example). While it may be a little tougher to observe in metro, in rural Nova Scotia, communities that have universities thrive, creating a significant economic benefit to the region and the people of the province overall.