



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY

Project Announcement: The Athlete Equity, Safety, and Well-being Project

December 7, 2023

Mandated by the President, the Offices of the VP Finance and Administration and the VP Students have launched the Athlete Equity, Safety, and Well-being Project.

Introduction and Context

StFX University is dedicated to principles of equity, anti-racism, and accessibility within its varsity athletic programs.

In recent years, a critical examination of inequity, discrimination, and gender-based violence in sports has gained momentum across Canada and the globe. Events within our university and beyond have illuminated the pressing issues of systemic inequity, gender-based violence, sexual violence, racism, discrimination, colonialization, and whiteness within the realm of athletics.

Multiple StFX committees, such as the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Committee, the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism, and the Equity Advisory Committee have been active in addressing these issues institution-wide.

We acknowledge that broader societal issues, including sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response, equity, racial inequality, accessibility, and inclusion, must be addressed using an intersectional lens to promote a fair, welcoming, and supportive environment for everyone involved in sport at StFX.

The Athlete Equity, Safety, and Well-being Project aligns with the efforts StFX Athletics is already taking with its partners, Atlantic University Sport and U SPORTS, to promote equity and safety in sport.

Key Initiatives

1. The creation of the **Athletics Equity and Safety Advisory Committee**: This committee will develop a tailored framework specific to StFX Athletics, focusing on employment equity, equitable resourcing, creating a culture of inclusion, respect, consent, safety and understanding of power dynamics within the athletic community. It will assess existing policies and practices, ensuring alignment with these objectives, drawing on the experiences of campus stakeholders including student-athletes, coaches, and support staff. The Terms of Reference will be released shortly. The goal is for this work to begin in January 2024.



The Athletics Equity and Safety Advisory Committee will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the PACAR Action Plan and Equity Policy, offering recommendations to ensure their effective implementation within the realm of athletics.

2. The creation of the **Student Athlete Flourishing Working Group**: Recognizing and valuing the unique experiences of student-athletes within the broader framework of the Student Experience and Opportunity Plan (SEOP) and the Academic Plan, this Working Group aims to enhance the first year and academic experience of athletes. It will focus on mental health and well-being, given the unique pressures faced by student-athletes. This includes addressing the stigma around mental health issues and providing accessible support services.

Actions To Date

The Athlete Equity, Safety, and Well-being Project seeks to promote continuous improvement within StFX Athletics, ensuring equity, safety, and inclusion. Much activity has occurred in the lead up to the formal launch of the Project including:

- Consultations and professional development sessions to initiate project planning, equip staff with necessary knowledge, and foster a culture of equity and safety.
- Fall Sexual Violence Prevention Education Programs have been completed.
- Commitments including (but not limited to) extended Sexual Violence Prevention Programming within Athletics, developing an operational workplan for student-athlete supports, implementing diverse hiring practices for coaching and leadership positions that consider gender, race, ethnicity, and other intersectional identities, creating an Athletic Equity Policy that includes clear goals and benchmarks for success, researching female coach development pathways, forming an Athletics Equity and Safety in Sport Advisory Committee

A Related Concurrent Initiative

Simultaneously, we are working with the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee and related staff members to advance our plans to strengthen sexual violence prevention and responses. The Athletics Equity and Safety Advisory Committee will work with the recommendations of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Committee that pertain to athletics and advise on implementation. Further details concerning the significant new initiatives will be shared in the new year once finalized by the relevant committees and staff.

The university is committed to implementing and sustaining these initiatives and will provide regular updates on progress.

Monica Foster, *Vice President, Administration and Finance*

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