



St. Stephen's College

Memo: Return to Campus Announcement

To: All St. Stephen's College Students and Faculty

Regarding: SSC Return to Campus Phases

Dear Students and Faculty,

Warm greetings to you on these rather warm summer days. I hope you are staying well and staying cool in what has been an unseasonably warm June and July. With the warm weather comes renewed expectations and hopes regarding our pivot out of the pandemic and return to some semblance of normalcy. Across Canada, provincial re-opening plans are in full swing, with more and more public and social activity taking place. These are hopeful signs, and while we must continue to be vigilant and careful, the widespread distribution and uptake of the vaccine has renewed our expectations that the worst of the pandemic is hopefully—and likely—behind us.

Like many organizations, St. Stephen's is taking a phased approach toward returning to on-campus work and learning. Moving forward in phases allows sufficient time for our community—which is spread across Canada and parts of the United States and Europe—to have access to both doses of the vaccine, to prepare mentally and socially for coming back to campus, and to have enough time to plan study and travel plans for the year ahead.

Over the next several months, key dates in our Return to Campus plan are as follows:

August 23, 2021: Campus reopens. The St. Stephen's campus will again be open to all members of our community and the public as of August 23. At this time, students will no longer need to make appointments to come to campus. The University library also aims to start re-opening by mid-August. Regarding St. Stephen's meetings (board, senate, program committees, etc.), a decision will be made in the Fall whether and when we might resume these gatherings in person. All who are on campus will be required to comply with all public health guidelines and any other recommendations outlined by the College and/or the University.

In the weeks leading up to August 23, students are still permitted to make appointments to access campus for the purposes of conducting research (e.g., use of the library e-databases). Students wishing to come to campus can make an appointment with Shelley Westermann.

September 1, 2021: Courses continue via online, remote delivery with a limited number of in-person offerings. Most Fall 2021 courses will continue to be delivered via online, remote delivery. This decision was made in light of a number of factors, including: (a) the March 10, 2021 announcement that our community should expect Fall courses to continue online, (b) careful and comparative review of re-opening plans and timelines from across Canada, recognizing that not all provincial jurisdictions are re-opening at the same rate, (c) consultation with students regarding matters of travel and Fall course enrollments, and (d) the recognition that not all in our community will be able/comfortable to return to campus as early as the Fall.

Only two Fall 2021 courses will be delivered in person: (1) CATS 382: Intro to Drama Therapy (offered by St. Stephen's for the University of Alberta), and (2) CPE 5889: Supervised Pastoral Education. All other Fall 2021 courses will be delivered via online, remote delivery. Internships and practicums will continue in their current manner.

January 1, 2022: SSC courses return to in-person delivery. St. Stephen's faculty and students should expect that, barring an unforeseen public health crisis, all St. Stephen's courses will return to their intended delivery method beginning January 1, 2022. This means that courses that are intended to be in-person will return to be delivered as such, and courses that are intended to be online will continue as such. Making this transition on January 1, 2022 (a) allows our faculty sufficient time to pivot their courses back to an in-person delivery mode, (b) provides our students sufficient time to plan their study and travel schedules, and (c) provides flexibility for the College to respond—if necessary—to any additional public health requirements.

Later this summer we will decide about whether or not the Fall 2021 convocation can be held in person. Details will be decided and conveyed by mid-/late-August.

The above dates have been chosen (in part) to allow our community and those who visit campus sufficient time to access both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. I strongly encourage all in the St. Stephen's community who are able to do so to book their appointment to be vaccinated. The vaccine has proven very effective at reducing the risk of infection, and its widespread distribution hastens our return to normalcy.

All of us at St. Stephen's look forward with much excitement to being able to gather on campus again for courses, college events, meetings, and any other social gathering. We are close, and we will be there soon. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to the College if you have any questions or require clarity on any of the matters addressed above.

With thanks,
Fred Tappenden,
Principal and Dean,
St. Stephen's College