

**BILATERAL AGREEMENT**

Between

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND ADVANCED EDUCATION  
(Representing the Government of Nova Scotia)**

And

**THE PRESIDENT OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY  
(Representing Saint Mary's University)**

**October 1, 2014 – March 31, 2016**

## **Intention**

This bilateral agreement is intended to identify key activities that Saint Mary’s University will undertake between October 1, 2014 and March 31, 2016, and which are supported and endorsed by the Province of Nova Scotia, in order to support and advance the Partnership’s joint vision statement and differentiation statement. Furthermore, any activities undertaken as a result of this bilateral agreement are intended to complement the work that the Partnership has undertaken through the *Memorandum of Understanding Between The Province of Nova Scotia and The Nova Scotia Universities Excellence Through Partnership 2012-2015* agreement (The MOU). This bilateral agreement is intended to support Saint Mary’s University in its role as one of Nova Scotia’s ten universities; it is not intended to supercede Saint Mary’s University’s involvement in developing and implementing the next MOU.

## **Vision Statement**

The Province of Nova Scotia and the ten universities have a shared vision of “a differentiated, collaborative system of autonomous universities that is globally competitive in the quality of its academic programs and research activities, locally connected to provincial social and economic goals, accessible for Nova Scotia students and responsibly supported by the Provincial government.” (April 26, 2013)

## **Differentiation Statement**

In addition, on April 26, 2013, the Partnership Table consisting of the ten university presidents and the Deputy Ministers of Labour and Advanced Education, Economic and Rural Development and Tourism,

Education and Early Childhood Development, Finance and Treasury Board and Planning and Priorities agreed on the following differentiation statement: “Differentiation of our university system entails a single comprehensive research intensive university, a number of primarily undergraduate universities and specialty institutions.”

### **Shared Priorities**

The Province of Nova Scotia and Saint Mary’s University agree, for the purposes of implementing this bilateral agreement, that the following priorities will be the focus of discussions for the term of this agreement:

- A Sustainable High Quality University System;
- A Focus on Students;
- A Shared Priority to Growing Nova Scotia’s Economic Prosperity, Cultural Development, and Social Wellbeing; and
- A Commitment to Collaboration and Shared Services.

### **A Sustainable High Quality University System**

Saint Mary’s University will continue to focus on financial sustainability and will undertake the internal measures necessary to achieve sustainability while operating within the parameters agreed to in The MOU. The University commits to delivering a balanced budget and continuing to identify operating and program efficiencies wherever possible.

Further, the University commits to developing, or improving upon, an internal process for reviewing any auxiliary and ancillary fees that are charged to students above and beyond program tuition fees. The University’s internal process for reviewing and changing fees will be communicated to student leaders.

### **A Focus on Students**

Saint Mary’s University agrees to emphasize student recruitment and retention as key components of a student success strategy. Specifically, Saint Mary’s University agrees to:

- Develop or strengthen a student recruitment strategy that seeks to recruit students to study both on campus and through distance education programs;
- Partner with the Province on designing and implementing a research initiative that looks at factors affecting student retention within both undergraduate and graduate programs;
- Partner with the Province to support the *One Nova Scotia* goal of population growth by working to retain both domestic and international students attending Saint Mary’s University and assisting them in transitioning to the labour market, including through co-op and internship programs, with the knowledge, skills and credentials needed to contribute meaningfully to the community and workplace;

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- Partner with the Province and Nova Scotia universities to support the transparent communication of transfer credits available at Nova Scotia universities and the Nova Scotia Community College;
- Partner with the Province and Nova Scotia universities to develop pathways among and between Nova Scotia institutions and clearly communicate these pathways to students. Such pathways will be strengthened through Saint Mary’s University’s continued development of articulation agreements and joint programming with other post-secondary institutions, and the further development of shared services among institutions that enhance the overall post-secondary experience for students;
- Offer students more choices in learning through creative use of technologies and flexible course delivery options;
- Partner with the Province and other universities to retain top research talent in Nova Scotia by implementing, reporting and recommending improvements to the new Graduate Scholarship Program;
- Identify best practices in post-secondary teaching and learning, and develop or strengthen the institutional approach to supporting teaching excellence, with an aim to improve the undergraduate and graduate student experience, sharing best practices with other universities wherever possible; and
- Partner with other Nova Scotia institutions, the Province, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and School Boards to develop province-wide strategies and programming that will ensure entering students

have the required knowledge and skills necessary to succeed at university; this includes ensuring that entering students have essential skills in mathematics and literacy as well as English language skills for students whose first language is not English (French for USteA); the University may be asked to participate in the development and implementation of a baseline survey of undergraduate students and teaching faculty on this issue.

**A Shared Priority to Growing Nova Scotia’s Economic Prosperity, Cultural Development, and Social Wellbeing**

*One Nova Scotia* acknowledged that Nova Scotia’s “high concentration of universities and colleges [is] a fundamental asset in growing our economy” and a key competitive driver for the Province. As an important partner in economic growth, Saint Mary’s University commits to working with the Province in order to:

- Maximize opportunities to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace through the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and experiential learning activities such as service learning, international exchanges including study abroad, incubators, change labs and cooperative education;
- Build upon a network of partnerships that promote prosperity through entrepreneurship, innovation (including social innovation), and connections to government, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and industry;
- Actively develop community connections that enable closer collaboration with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),

large business enterprises, not-for-profit organizations, volunteer groups, government and others; and

- Identify and grow research and development opportunities, development of human capital, knowledge mobilization (i.e. communicate research outcomes to those within and outside of academia) and the commercialization of research that align with, and enhance, Provincial assets and strengths.

### **A Commitment to Collaboration and Shared Services**

The Province and Saint Mary’s University recognize the importance of a university system where the member institutions work closely together to maximize efficiencies, services and strengths. This collaboration is best demonstrated through the MOU’s Partnership Table. However, each member university of the Partnership Table has the responsibility to continue to foster collaboration in the interests of maintaining competitiveness and helping to ensure sustainability. Saint Mary’s University commits to continued collaboration in many areas including, but not restricted to, the following:

- Research and development projects;
- Entrepreneurship, social innovation and sandbox/incubator initiatives;
- Promoting teaching excellence;
- Developing joint courses and programming;
- Sharing technologies and delivery mechanisms;

- Developing shared portals for the purposes of recruitment and retention; and
- Promoting Nova Scotia as a study destination.

### **Unique Considerations**

Saint Mary’s University is unique in its long term commitment to developing global partnerships, and promoting accessible and applied trans-disciplinary education founded on the creation of critical, ethical and inter-cultural learning contexts. These differentiating strengths have led to Saint Mary’s University strategically reaching out to communities at home and abroad.

In recognition of Saint Mary’s University’s role, the Province agrees to support the University in:

- Exploring potential for the expansion of programming, including experiential learning, professional, executive and continuing education, off-campus and off-shore that would enable Saint Mary’s University to grow its local, national and international enrolments in all Faculties as well as its unique graduate programs and research centres;
- Identifying and developing best practices in promoting entrepreneurship and social innovation education on campus and across all faculties, with a view toward becoming a national leader in this area;
- Leading Nova Scotia universities in developing a Change Lab Action Research Institute (CLARI) to empower communities



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through connectivity, knowledge translation, skill development, research and other resources; and

- Partnering with Government and with Acadia, CBU, Dalhousie and St.FX to participate in a discussion on the current model for delivering engineering programming with a goal of making recommendations for any improvements that may be identified as necessary for Nova Scotia to deliver high quality, relevant engineering programming at the undergraduate level.

**Communication**

Both parties commit to working together in a positive and transparent manner, in order to advance and achieve the mutually beneficial outcomes articulated in this bilateral agreement. The parties may agree to amend this letter from time to time as required.

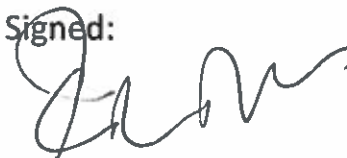
Signed:



Honourable Kelly Regan  
Minister, NS Labour and Advanced Education

Date: *October 1, 2014*

Signed:



Dr. J. Colin Dodds  
President and Vice-Chancellor,  
Saint Mary's University

Date: *October 1st 2014*