

Letter of Understanding

Between St. Francis Xavier University
(hereafter referred to as the University)

and

St. Francis Xavier University Association of University Teachers
(hereafter referred to as the StFXAUT)

(collectively the "Parties")


RE: Administration in the School of Nursing

The Parties agree that the attached document, titled "School of Nursing Governance Structure" will govern administration in the School of Nursing until the signing of a renewal collective agreement. Where there is a conflict between this document and the Collective Agreement, this document will govern.

Signed at Antigonish, Nova Scotia this 18 day of July 2025.



Dr. David Young
For the StFXAUT



Dr. Amanda Cockshutt
For the University

School of Nursing Governance Structure

This governance structure promotes effective leadership, ensures faculty and nurse educator involvement in academic and nursing practice affairs, and provides comprehensive support to students within the School of Nursing.

Note:

- This new section (below) of the Collective Agreement would be separate from but aligned with the Chairs' and Coordinators' roles and responsibilities. Items 1.0–2.2 could remain the same for the proposed Director roles, and a new section (# TBD below) would be added and specified for Directors in Nursing. From 2.3 on, there are roles and responsibilities specific to the Rankin School of Nursing Directors.
- The appointment of Directors will follow the CCD Selection Committee process.
- The content for Section 5, Article 5.1 (item 5.0) is not a new position but replaces the title and provides greater clarity to the assignment of the Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice.
- Nominations for the Nurse Educator Lead will be sought from the School of Nursing. Refer to Appendix A for details on the selection processes for the Nurse Educator Lead. Such roles should be thoughtfully integrated into their existing workload to ensure alignment and support.

1. Associate Dean (AD) (Non-Union Position)

Role:

Provides overarching leadership and strategic direction for the School of Nursing.

Responsibilities:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure adherence to all regulatory and legislative requirements pertinent to nursing education and practice.
- **Accreditation Leadership:** Lead accreditation processes and serve as the primary liaison with external accrediting bodies.
- **Program Evaluation:** Lead the implementation of the organizational (educational unit) component of the program evaluation framework.
- **External Relations:** Manage relationships with government entities, community partners, and other external stakeholders to advance the school's mission.
- **Administrative Oversight:** Supervise administrative staff and manage non-academic operational matters, including facilities and resource allocation.
- **Nursing Council Meetings:** Convene at least two School of Nursing Council meetings annually to discuss strategic initiatives and foster open communication.
- **Budget Development and Management:** Develop and manage the school's budget with input from the Directors on their perspectives related to budgeting decisions, resource allocation, and financial

planning. Ensure consensus with the Directors and submit to the Dean. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the Associate Dean may exercise their decision-making responsibilities.

- **Teaching Assignments:** Initiate discussions with faculty and nurse educators regarding their teaching preferences, areas of expertise, and any considerations impacting their assignments. Provide oversight of the teaching assignment process and incorporate input from the Directors, and Nurse Educator Lead to ensure alignment with program needs. Ensure consensus with the Directors, Nurse Educator Lead, and submit to the Dean. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the Associate Dean may exercise their decision-making responsibilities.
- **Faculty/Nurse Educator & Student Recruitment:** Oversee the recruitment of students, faculty, and nurse educators. Oversee the hiring of faculty, LTAs, nurse educators, and staff.
- **Student Support:** Holds a high-level strategic and administrative role on student issues related to legal, institutional policy, or appeals processes.
- **Equipment Management:** Oversee purchasing, maintenance, and allocation of equipment in alignment with budgetary decisions.
- **Website:** Oversee the accuracy of content and ease of accessibility.
- **Academic Oversight:** Holds overall responsibility for the supervision of instruction, research activities, and the development and implementation of program policies within the School of Nursing.
- **Academic Calendar:** Responsible for overseeing relevant materials for the academic calendar.
- **Track Sick Leave and Vacation** of Staff and Nurse Educators; notify People and Culture of faculty absence lasting five consecutive working days or totals of twelve non-consecutive working days in one academic semester (see article 2.4.4. item 6.0).
- **Professional Engagement:** Represent the School of Nursing at national and regional meetings and actively contribute to advancing the profession through participation in committees, networks, and strategic initiatives.
- **Foster a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment:** Provides leadership in fostering a healthy, respectful, and inclusive work environment with a particular focus on supporting faculty and nurse educators and promoting collegiality; equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA); and overall well-being.
- **University Administration mtgs (including Dean's meetings):** Provides clear representation and voice of the nursing program.
- **Teaching Responsibilities** if assigned.

2. Director of Academic Programs (4-year stream) and Director of Academic Programs (AO/LPN Streams) (Union Positions)

Role:

The Directors of Academic Programs and Curriculum (4-Year Stream / AO-LPN Stream) provide academic leadership for their assigned stream, with responsibilities spanning curriculum design and implementation, program evaluation, faculty support, strategic planning, and operational coordination.

This role ensures that academic programs align with professional standards, regulatory requirements, and evolving educational and healthcare priorities.

Working closely with the Associate Dean and other School of Nursing leaders, the Director contributes to decision-making processes related to teaching assignments, budgeting, accreditation, and program development. The role also supports faculty engagement, oversees course oversight and honours programming, and plays a key part in fostering academic excellence across both classroom and clinical learning environments

Teaching Credit Release: 7.5 credits per year for each Director

Stipend: Based on the numbers as of today, for instance if there are 13 faculty and 24 Nurse Educators and administrative staff. The calculation would be:

Base Stipends: $6000 + 1950 = 7950$

Faculty Per Capita: $295 * 13 = 3835$

Staff Per Capita = $150 * 24 = 3600$

Total: 15385

Per Director: $15385 / 3 = \$5,128.33$

Responsibilities:

Curriculum and Program Evaluation Leadership

- Report to the Associate Dean.
- Collaborate with the Associate Dean, Director of Student Affairs and the Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice to support academic program delivery.
- Coordinate, facilitate, and contribute to curriculum implementation across all years of the programs (e.g., simulation activities, IPE, activities associated with non-nursing courses, and course and program assessments).
- Monitor and implement program design and practice changes, including modification of degree requirements.
- Prepare curriculum and policy submissions for review by the Associate Dean and relevant committees.
- Provide leadership and support to Faculty and Nurse Educators regarding curriculum development and implementation.
- Prepare curriculum documents for accreditation and program approval.
- Lead the implementation of the curricular component of the program evaluation framework to assess program effectiveness and guide curriculum development in response to emerging priorities.
- Consult with academic and practice partners, as well as students, to gather feedback on curricular issues.
- Budget: Collaborate with the Associate Dean by providing input essential to budgeting decisions, resource allocation, and financial planning. Ensure consensus* among the Directors and the Associate Dean (*as per article 2.0.2 item 2.0 and item 2.1).

- **Teaching Assignments:** Contribute to the teaching assignment process to ensure alignment with curricular needs and instructional expertise in collaboration with the Associate Dean. Ensure consensus* among the Directors and the Associate Dean (*as per article 2.0.2 item 2.0 and item 2.1).
- **Course Oversight:** Review all course syllabi to ensure adherence to academic regulations.
- **Honors Program:** Oversee and coordinate academic support for students in the Honours Program (specific to the 4-year stream only).
- **Equipment Management:** Assist the Associate Dean with purchasing, maintenance, and allocation of equipment.
- **Library Coordination:** Consult with the Librarian and oversee acquisition of library resources.
- **Evaluation Committee Involvement:** Share chairing* responsibilities for the Evaluation Committee on a rotating basis (*can opt out of chairing if not tenured).
- **Strategic Planning -** Support the Associate Dean in developing and implementing strategic planning initiatives for the School of Nursing.
- **Faculty Meetings:** Convene faculty meetings monthly or as needed.
- **Nurse Educator Meetings:** Attend nurse educator meetings to provide updates and receive feedback on curricular issues, including clinical placements, labs, and simulation (SIM), as needed.
- **Attend National Chairs and Coordinator meetings** (Collective Agreement 2.3k) on a rotating basis with the other Directors.
- **Government, Regulatory and Association Relations:** Assist with government, regulatory (NSCN), and association (CASN) relations as needed.
- **Recruitment and Hiring:** Participate in the recruitment and hiring processes on a rotating basis.

3. Director of Nursing Student Affairs and Educational Initiatives (Union Position)

Role:

This role serves a dual purpose within the School of Nursing. The role supports nursing students by addressing concerns and providing nursing academic advising the diverse learning needs of nursing students. This position is essential for ensuring student support strategies create an equitable and effective learning environment for all students.

It provides academic and administrative support across both classroom and clinical settings, complementing the work of Faculty and Nurse Educators by ensuring alignment between academic and clinical leadership to foster a cohesive, student-centered approach to success.

The Director of Nursing Student Affairs and Educational Initiatives shall manage activities pertaining to students and any other pedagogical, operational, and administrative issues relevant to the students in the Nursing program.

Teaching Credit Release: 7.5 credits per year for each Director

Stipend: Based on the numbers as of today, for instance if there are 13 faculty and 24 Nurse Educators and administrative staff. The calculation would be:

Base Stipends: $6000 + 1950 = 7950$

Faculty Per Capita: $295 * 13 = 3835$

Staff Per Capita = $150 * 24 = 3600$

Total: 15385

Per Director: $15385 / 3 = \$5,128.33$

Responsibilities:

- Reports to the Associate Dean.
- Collaborates with Faculty, Nurse Educators, Directors for Academic Programming, the Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice, and the Associate Dean to support student success and academic progression.
- **Student Support and Advocacy** - Serves as the primary point of contact for nursing students, addressing and resolving concerns related to both academic and clinical experiences.
- **Academic Advising:**
 - Monitor academic progress and provide guidance on program requirements.
 - Provide guidance on course selection, program requirements, and pathways for academic success.
- **Clinical Placement Support** Liaises with Nurse Educator Lead and Placement Coordinators on student-specific placement concerns
- **Student Conduct and Professionalism Oversight:** Address issues related to student behavior, professionalism, and conduct across academic and clinical settings. Investigate and manage concerns related to academic integrity, professionalism breaches, and other student-related issues.
- **Student Resource Navigation:** Advocate for the needs of nursing students within the School of Nursing and the broader university community to support inclusive, student-centered decision-making. Connects students to campus resources as needed.
- **Teaching Enhancement and Learner Support:** Assist faculty and nurse educators in developing comprehensive plans to accommodate diverse student needs in courses, labs, and clinical settings.
- **Progression Support:** Support students navigating academic challenges, appeals, and progression requirements.
- **Clinical Education and Quality Improvement:** Identify and leverage opportunities for quality improvement that inform and enhance clinical education.
- Works with the Associate Dean, Directors and Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice to strengthen the integration of theory and practice across classroom, lab, simulation and clinical settings. Ensures learning opportunities align with current healthcare trends, entry-level competencies, and provide cohesive educational experiences in collaboration with practice partners.
- **Evaluation Committee Involvement:** Share chairing* responsibilities for the Evaluation Committee on a rotating basis (*can opt out of chairing if not tenured).
- **Nurse Educator Meetings:** Attend nurse educator meetings to provide updates and receive feedback on curricular issues, including clinical placements, labs, and simulation (SIM), as needed.
- Attend National Chairs and Coordinator meetings (Collective Agreement 2.3k) on a rotating basis with the other Directors.

4. Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice (Union Position)

Role:

Nurse Educators may also be assigned the role of Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice by the Associate Dean, with a workload of 0.5 FTE per year. The assignment will be a 3-year term with the possibility of renewal. The individual appointed to this role should have recent clinical experience and/or a strong understanding of the current healthcare system. This role is designed to collaborate with the Director of Student Affairs and the Directors of Academic Programs, providing clinical practice expertise to support student success and curriculum integration.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Reporting and Coordination:** Report to the Associate Dean. Maintain documentation related to clinical education, including concerns and program needs. Contribute to the teaching assignment process to ensure alignment with clinical placement needs and practice expertise in collaboration with the Associate Dean.
- **Clinical Partnership Development and Placement Coordination** Build and maintain respectful, reciprocal partnerships with practice sites, ensuring regular communication and recognition of the contributions of unit staff in collaboration with clinical course coordinators.
- **Clinical Practice Oversight:** Provide operational oversight of clinical placements and management of placement cancellations, adjustments, and alternative arrangements. Collaborate with clinical practice partners to ensure sufficient placement availability and oversee HSPnet relationships and activity for the RSoN. Liaise with Clinical Course Coordinators to provide placement information to Nurse Educators and students including clinical placement schedule to Nurse Educators and students in a timely manner.
- **Interprofessional Education (IPE):** Supports the implementation of IPE in clinical setting fostering intra/interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration and learning.
- **Clinical Input on Student Conduct and Remediation:** Support the Director of Student Affairs by providing clinical expertise and guidance on matters related to student performance, conduct, and remediation in clinical environments, including simulation and lab. In collaboration with the Director of Student Affairs, serve as a resource and support for Nurse Educators managing complex student practice issues. Collaborate with Clinical Course Coordinators regarding clinical group assignment.
- **Nurse Educator Practice Support:** Convene Nursing Education (NE) practice meetings as needed or as determined by the NE group. Keep informed of relevant policies and procedures within partner organizations and circulate updates as needed.
- **Practice-Based Learning and Innovation:** Collaborates with the Associate Dean and Directors on the strategies that ensure lab, simulation, and clinical practice opportunities align with innovative and current healthcare trends, including entry-level competencies.
- **Committee Membership:** Serve as chair of the Nurse Educator Performance Evaluation Committee.

Appendix A

Selection Process for Nurse Educator Lead for Clinical Education and Practice

Step 1: Call for Applications

The Associate Dean will issue a clear internal call for applications, including:

- Position description
- Required submission: brief letter of interest and current CV
- Deadline for application
- Evaluation criteria (see Appendix B)

Step 2: Formation of a Selection Committee

The Associate Dean will coordinate the formation of a selection committee, ensuring representation aligns with the agreed structure.

Composition of the selection committee will include:

- Two faculty members (different ranks)
- Director, Student Affairs School of Nursing*
- Three nurse educators (differing levels of experience)

*Note: this position, when filled, will be included. The selection committee will proceed if the position is vacant to avoid delays and operations.

Step 3: Review of Applications

Faculty and Nurse Educators will receive an email indicating who has agreed to stand for the position and invite input on the appropriateness of their candidacy. Input received will be shared with the Selection Committee members.

Committee members review all submissions using the evaluation criteria.

Committee members will independently review applications and then meet to discuss. A person is selection based on a majority vote of the selection committee members.

Step 4: Implementation and Feedback

The Associate Dean appoints the Nurse Educator Lead based on the selection committee decision and communicates the appointment to the School in email. Prior to communicating the designated person to the School, the Associate Dean will send all applicants a follow-up email and brief feedback summary.

Appendix B

Evaluation Criteria

Note to Selection Committee: This evaluation criteria table is to be adjusted for the number of applicants, which each rating column representing an applicant.

Decision-making criteria	Rating (1-5)
Experience/engagement with placement and experiential learning, as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs (working groups, process improvement, etc.)	
Engaging with learners to progress through the program, particularly in developing knowledge-base and professionalism (as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs)	
Engagement with program assessment and evaluation (as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs)	
Capacity for consistent efficiency and productivity in current role over time. (as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs)	
Capacity for accountability, responsibility, and advancing quality improvement and learner-centered approach in the SON (as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs)	
Interpersonal skills that demonstrate fairness and ethical engagement with all members of the SON (Administrative Assistant, Faculty, NEs)	
Organizational skills (as evidenced by candidate actions and outputs)	
Strengths (not rated)	
Areas for Growth (not rated)	

