



Bulletin

Culture of Entitlement @ StFX

On October 18, 2022, the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT) released a report, [*A Culture of Entitlement: An Overview of Administrative Spending at Eight Nova Scotia Universities 2011/12 – 2020/21*](#), examining the total number of senior administrators and their overall compensation. As stated, “As executive compensation rockets skyward, faculty and students struggle to keep up.”

As highlighted in the associated press release, “Spending on administrative salaries at Nova Scotia universities has increased an average of 84% in 10 years.” At StFX, this spending has **more than doubled to over \$10 million**; meanwhile, revenue from student academic fees increased 68% and total ordinary revenue (which excludes ancillary enterprises) increased by just under 38%. Over the same period, the increase in spending on AUT Member salaries was under 25% (Table 1).

The increase in administrative spending is due in part to individual salary increases, but the majority is due to new administrative positions. Since 2012, StFX added 11 directors and 15 managers, bringing the total numbers to 26 and 62, respectively.

10-year Change	2011/12	2020/21	% Increase
Admin Salaries	5,086,184	10,563,511	107.7%
Student Fees	29,366,449	49,462,495	68.4%
Ordinary Revenue	70,621,345	97,404,057	37.9%
Member Salaries	28,591,625	35,575,375	24.3%

Table 1: Comparative 10-year Increases at StFX

According to the report, “StFX had 165 part-time and limited term faculty in 2016/17, in addition to 228 full-time faculty, indicating that 42% of the teaching staff were contract appointments.” [pg. 32] According to data collected by the StFXAUT during 2021/22, the percentage of contract appointments rose to over 50% of teaching staff, with 165 part-time, 62 limited-term, and only 225 full-time faculty with continuing appointments.

The report also highlights the change in administrator compensation cost per student at StFX between 2012 (\$1032) and 2021 (\$1812), **a more than 75% increase**. [pg. 46] According to the values included in the [StFX Financial Reports](#), the number of full-time employees in Finance and Administration increased from 189 in 2015/16 to 235 in 2021/22, a more than 24% jump in six years. In contrast, the number on the Academic side increased by under 10%¹ and the full-time equivalent number of undergraduate students was up 12%. [[MPHEC](#)]

Full-Time Employees	2015/16	2021/22	% Increase
Faculty & Librarians	303	327	7.9%
Academic Staff	112	123	9.8%
Finance & Administration	189	235	24.3%
All Others	125	121	-3.2%
Total	729	806	10.6%
FTE Undergrads	4293	4805	11.9%

Table 2: Full-Time Numbers

¹ Counting is inconsistent across sources. Some counts include administrators tenured to departments while others do not. It is unclear who is included in Academic Faculty & Librarians in the Financial Reports, since the number is significantly higher than the number of dues-paying members in that category.

The report also sheds light on the benefits enjoyed by administrators, especially presidents, who earn paid administrative leave, topped-up pension plans, and other special benefits, including allowances for housing, car, travel, and various other recreational activities. Referenced in the report is a [CBC News article²](#) containing former President Sean Riley’s final contract in 2012, which lists a \$527,563.63 payout when he signed the contract and another \$733,074.40 held in trust as a retirement allowance.

According to the StFX Public Sector Disclosures, non-pension compensation provided to Dr. Riley between 2014/15 and 2019/20 exceeded \$1.7 million, while President Kent MacDonald received more than \$2.2 million in compensation over the same time period. In fact, Dr. MacDonald’s five years of service averaged him **close to \$450,000 per year**, excluding pensions and other undisclosed allowances. Together they received in excess of **\$4 million** between 2014/15 and 2019/20.

Compensation	Riley	MacDonald
2014/15	449,995	215,532
2015/16	442,052	370,400
2016/17	100,000	363,266
2017/18	200,000	352,481
2018/19	574,406	359,328
2019/20	–	585,077
Total	1,766,453	2,246,084

Table 3: Presidential Payouts

Further details of presidential perks and other incentives are included in the StFX “At a Glance” section of the report. Absent from this list is the provision of Smith House as his residence plus a \$2000 per month stipend for its use, with the university responsible for incidental expenses. The report lists the total value of the benefits included in the contract as **\$116,650**, or **36%** of his actual salary of \$325,000. Details of Dr. Hakin’s 5-year contract are available on the [StFX website](#).

In the report, overall compensation of Vice-Presidents at StFX (including the Associate Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies) is listed as just under **\$1.2 million** for 2020/21. [Table 9] This is calculated as more than two and a half times the amount for 2011/12.

According to the Public Sector Disclosures, Andrew Beckett, former StFX Vice-President Finance and Administration, received \$190,000 in compensation in 2016/17 and \$225,219 in 2021/22, with increases averaging to **3.1%** per year. During the same timeframe, adjustments to the StFXAUT salary scales averaged below **1.55%** per year. Economic adjustments to the salaries of academic administrators are tied to those of the AUT. If this were the case for Mr. Beckett, he would have earned \$20 thousand less in 2021/22 and \$285 thousand less than his actual compensation over the six-year period.

Such increases were not just limited to StFX Vice-Presidents. The former Director of Human Resources, Jennifer Swinemar-Murray, enjoyed annual increases averaging more than **4.15%** during her six years in the role.

	Andrew Beckett	Jennifer S-M	AUT 2001
16/17	190,000	122,049	70,091
17/18	214,734	126,065	71,142
18/19	220,381	131,257	72,387
19/20	227,827	138,720	73,545
20/21	210,089	143,636	74,722
21/22	225,219	–	76,030
Up	18.5%	17.7%	8.5%

Table 4: Positional Compensation

As per the final recommendations in the *Culture of Entitlement* Report for all universities, StFX needs to limit the portion of spending that can be used for administrative expenses, pay a living wage to all employees, and move to prevent precarious employment. It is not AUT Members and their compensation that have created the financial stresses reported by the StFX administration.

² Smith, Sandy. (November 2015). *Former StFX president’s contract called ‘egregious’ for 1.2M leave payout*. Retrieved from [CBC News](#).