

## Media Release

April 4, 2016

### St. Thomas University Cancels Men's Hockey Program

St. Thomas University is cancelling its varsity men's hockey program. The decision, made by senior administration and supported by the Board of Governors, is part of a wider initiative to address a budget deficit.

"The costs of operating the men's hockey program are unsustainable in light of our other financial priorities, especially in academic and student areas—it is simply beyond our means," said Dawn Russell, St. Thomas University President and Vice-Chancellor. "We have an operating budget deficit and are closely examining costs across our operations."

Russell said the men's hockey program was expensive to operate, especially for a small university, and revenues from sponsorships, attendance, advertising and fundraising are not enough to offset costs to the university. The university will save \$245,000 annually from operating costs, athletic financial awards, and staffing related to the program. She added that men's hockey in the Atlantic University Sport is the most competitive conference in the country and requires a significant financial commitment.

"STU excels in many areas which are part of our core mission—national rankings for education quality, student success, quality faculty. We also excel in many athletics' programs, but funding men's hockey is at a different level. With this decision, we have chosen to remain focused on our core academic mission and we will continue to support other varsity athletics' programs."

Varsity athletics is a benefit to the university, noted Russell, attracting 180 students across 12 other varsity sports, including three other sport teams at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport level. Many athletes excel academically and are recognized as CIS Academic All-Canadians and Canadian Collegiate Athletics Association National Scholars.

"This was not an easy decision because we know how hard the coaches and the student athletes have worked. They have represented STU very well and have given a lot to the university and to our community," she said.

The timing of the announcement allows current and prospective student athletes to make decisions for the coming season.

"We have always respected and appreciated the commitment of our student athletes and coaching staff, as well as the support of the loyal fans of the men's hockey team. We know that they will be disappointed by this decision but we are making choices in the best interests of the wider university community," said Russell.

The decision has been communicated to the team in a private meeting and the rest of the STU community—students, staff, faculty, alumni—are being notified.

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**Media Contact** – Jeffrey Carleton at (506) 452-0522 or [carleton@stu.ca](mailto:carleton@stu.ca).