

Thank you to our Dean of Arts, Dr. Brebner.

On behalf of St Francis Xavier University, I extend a warm welcome to all of you, our distinguished and special guests, to the magnificent Mulroney Hall.

And what a wonderful day it is for this esteemed University. We are here to celebrate the official opening of a truly transformative academic program and its home, one of the most remarkable academic facilities in Canada.

I've been working in the post-secondary institution sector for more than 30 years and I must say that there are few days in one's career when one may conclude, unequivocally, that a project will change the course of a campus, a region, an entire Province, indeed,

this country and beyond. I'm proud to say that Mulroney Hall and the academic programs it furnishes is one of those projects.

The academic contributions of the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, empowered by this stunning facility, have already taken St Francis Xavier University to a new level.

Not only does it write a compelling narrative about teaching and learning...about spaces to collaborate and to work; this project is an investment in people - it's about independent research and scholarship, innovation, building the capacities of intellectuals, grappling with the issues of our day.

Many years ago, *then StFX President* Sean Riley's vision was to transform StFX into a

national university, a sought-after destination for the very best faculty and students from coast-to-coast; President Kent MacDonald's vision was to expand on that, for StFX to utilize its national status to transform and build the Nova Scotia economy, so that students would come to understand the region's beauty and the potential of living and working in this part of the country.

For your vision and your tireless work *to make this institution what it is today*, for your work on this incredible project, President Sean Riley and President Kent MacDonald, please stand and be recognized.

Dear guests, *I say to you* that the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government and Mulroney Hall elevate this deliberately-small,

proudly-rural, national university to the status of world-class.

Born from an inspirational vision, centred upon the bright, young minds of this country, this project has been many years in the making. From the moment of conceptualization seven years ago, to the Prime Minister spending countless days on the road sharing this vision with supporters and friends...to more recently... it has come together – at last.

So, we gathered our institutional experts for 18 months to meet with architects and engineers to consider, to plan, to design a building that would serve our students, our staff, our faculty, and our broader community like no other.

We carefully designed classroom spaces, like this one, the Barrick Auditorium, with the latest technology, with the very best in pedagogical practices in mind, for students to thrive academically.

In this facility, we have created accessible, informal learning spaces for students to meet, discuss, and debate, a Teaching and Learning Centre for our Faculty members to study and practice student-centred methods of outstanding teaching.

We designed the space where faculty members and students supported by \$25 million dollars in scholarships and endowed research chairs will gather at the leading research institute on policy and governance in this country, located

at a primarily undergraduate university - the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government.

The Institute is founded upon two main principles: to explore pressing issues that policymakers face in government and to provide interdisciplinary training to students committed to civic engagement and the pursuit of leadership in the fields of public policy and governance.

It is a gift to be entrusted with engaging and inspiring the next generation of young leaders and intellectuals; and this year's students have arrived and are now in the care of our fine professors within these splendid halls.

The academic landscape has been transformed at St Francis Xavier University, a place already known for its outstanding undergraduate educational experiences. The *Brian Mulroney Institute of Government* is now poised to join *the Frank McKenna Centre for Leadership*, *the Gerald Schwartz School of Business*, and *the renowned Coady Institute* to set a new international stage for academic programming and events which will transform our ideas about *leadership*, *about public policy*, *about community engagement and development*.

This is a moment of epic proportions for our institution. The next generation of leaders will follow in the footsteps of our Xaverian graduates, some of them here today.

Let me focus for a moment on one of those esteemed graduates.

Do you think that a 16-year-old young man, who walked onto this campus in the Fall term of 1955, could have imagined walking into this building today, among this distinguished group of guests? What a remarkable journey it has been from the lively student debates at StFX University to the House of Commons, a long and distinguished career, taking his place alongside the world's most influential leaders – a story that you will see displayed here in Mulroney Hall.

For the past six years, the Right Honorable Brian Mulroney travelled the world talking to friends, associates, and supporters about StFX

University, what it stood for, and why people should support it.

Why would someone spend thousands of hours of his time, exact so much careful attention to detail, give so much of himself to this project? – *the raising of \$100 million dollars*, of which, by the way, he ensured that, by absorbing all of the campaign expenses himself, EVERY PENNY raised would go to the university – not one nickel would be spent to cover any consultant, travel, or administrative costs.

In the process, he established the most generous scholarships and bursaries offering in this country, to ensure that the very best education remained accessible to those who may not have the financial means, in the most magnificent academic building.

It was all for the benefit of generations of students, professors, and staff today, and in the many years to come.

Well, you will hear it from this man, this graduate of StFX – his love for the University and what it did for him; his commitment to post-secondary education and the unique leadership opportunities it creates for its students; and, moreover, his desire to make StFX the very best institution in the country.

For that, Prime Minister Mulroney, on behalf of St Francis Xavier University and for all who believe in this institution and its power to make the world a better place, I thank you sir.

And now, honoured guests, please turn your attention to the video presentation on the screen.