

# **HOUSING SECURITY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NEWCOMER YOUTH AT MEMORIAL**

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# OVERVIEW OF HOUSING SECURITY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Housing affordability and concerns (CAMET, 2017)
- Memorial residences and Covid-19
- Students and economic impact of Covid-19
- Self-isolation housing





# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability in Atlantic Canada is a challenge – compounded by poor public transit and the boom/bust of natural resource dependency.

- 87% of international students in universities live in rented apartments or in dorms.
- In 2017, the average international student in NL spent **\$5,232** on accommodations, or 21% of their total spending.



By 2020, the cost of accommodations increased to **\$7,582** per student.

Sources: Gardner Pinfold. 2017; SRP Expenses Document 2020

# International students: what factors matter to their living success? 36% of identified factors are related to HOUSING.

**Table 5.3** Most important factors for Atlantic Canada living success, 2017

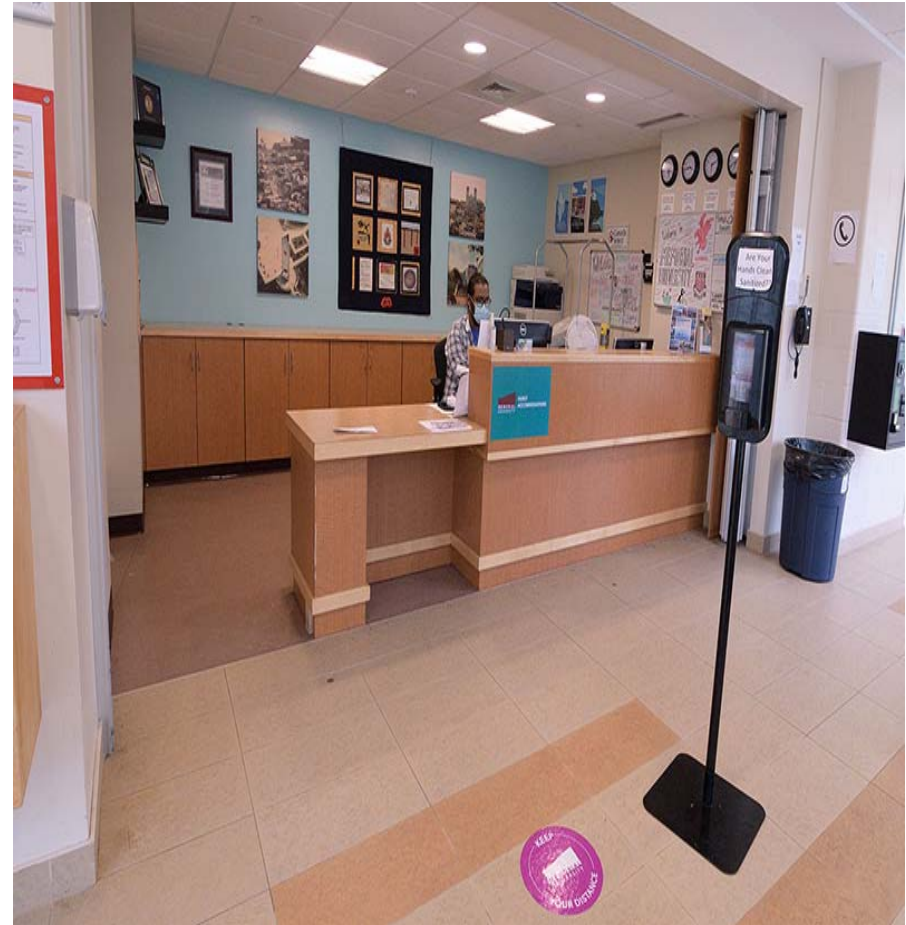
Living Success Factors	College	University	Combined
→ Affordable Living Cost	17.0%	17.1%	17.1%
Opportunity to Network	16.8%	14.4%	14.6%
Host Family or Canadian Friends	12.9%	11.7%	11.8%
→ Housing Quality	12.0%	11.3%	11.4%
Student Clubs/Societies	6.8%	10.9%	10.6%
Health Support	8.7%	10.7%	10.6%
→ Off-Campus Housing Services	5.2%	7.6%	7.5%
Faith Support	8.1%	6.7%	6.8%
Counselling Services	7.4%	5.5%	5.6%
Other	5.2%	4.2%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Gardner Pinfold survey, 2017

# MEMORIAL RESIDENCES & COVID-19

March 2020: rapid shut down of almost all residences at Memorial:

- *The least expensive dorms had older model of shared washrooms.*
- *Challenges of communications to students, leaving int'l students thinking they had to “go home”.*
- *Multiple moves of students from one set of dorms to another – with costs not grandfathered initially.*
- *Many international students scrambled for alternate affordable housing.*





# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

Memorial raised over \$300K to support students from March onward.

So far close to 80% of the funding has been directed to support international students?

All (100%) of international students that needed funding had housing security issues.

Federal support issues (CERB, CESB):

<https://gazette.mun.ca/campus-and-community/call-for-action/>



## Self-isolation programming

A whole new way of ‘welcoming’ new students and supporting returning students:

- *Strict management of student arrival at the airport or by car*
- *One residence dedicated to self-isolation of all newly arriving students.*
- *Daily check-ins and supports for students with arising issues.*
- *Public Health testing on Day 12 prior to release on Day 14.*
- *Rigorous enforcement of self-isolation – new int’l students may not leave the room for the full 14 days.*

# THE NEW NORMAL



# CONCLUSIONS

- International students are highly vulnerable to global economic downturns.
- Landlord-tenant relations proved very difficult to navigate – now working with an NGO legal team.
- Student stress and mental health have become issues – more than double the numbers of international students that have needed support for domestic violence.

