

INTRODUCTION

- August 20th, 2020, Premier Stephen McNeil announced that post-secondary students entering the province from outside Atlantic Canada will require COVID-19 testing along with 14 days of self-isolation.
- Students were to be testing at three different times during their 14 day isolation.
- To lessen the burden on the health care system, innovative testing models were rapidly rolled out, to help account for the large numbers of students requiring multiple COVID-19 tests.
- A mobile testing model was introduced to allow for in place testing at students dorm rooms.
- Unregulated testing personnel (peer-testers) were recruited and trained within days and testing began by August 26th. Just 6 days after the government made the announcement.
- **We created a survey to gage student opinions on testing, COVID-19 and how they're dealing with it all.**

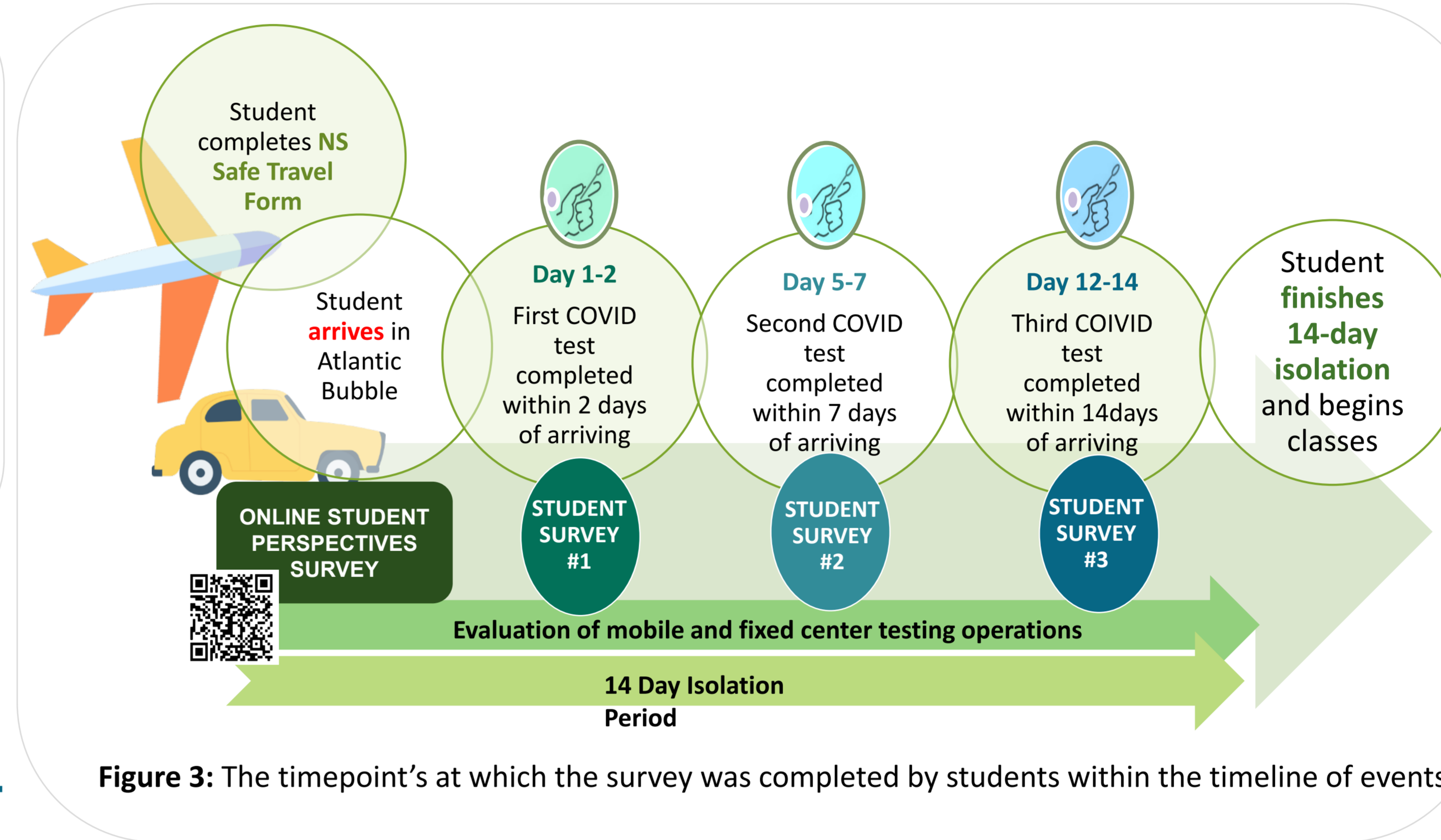
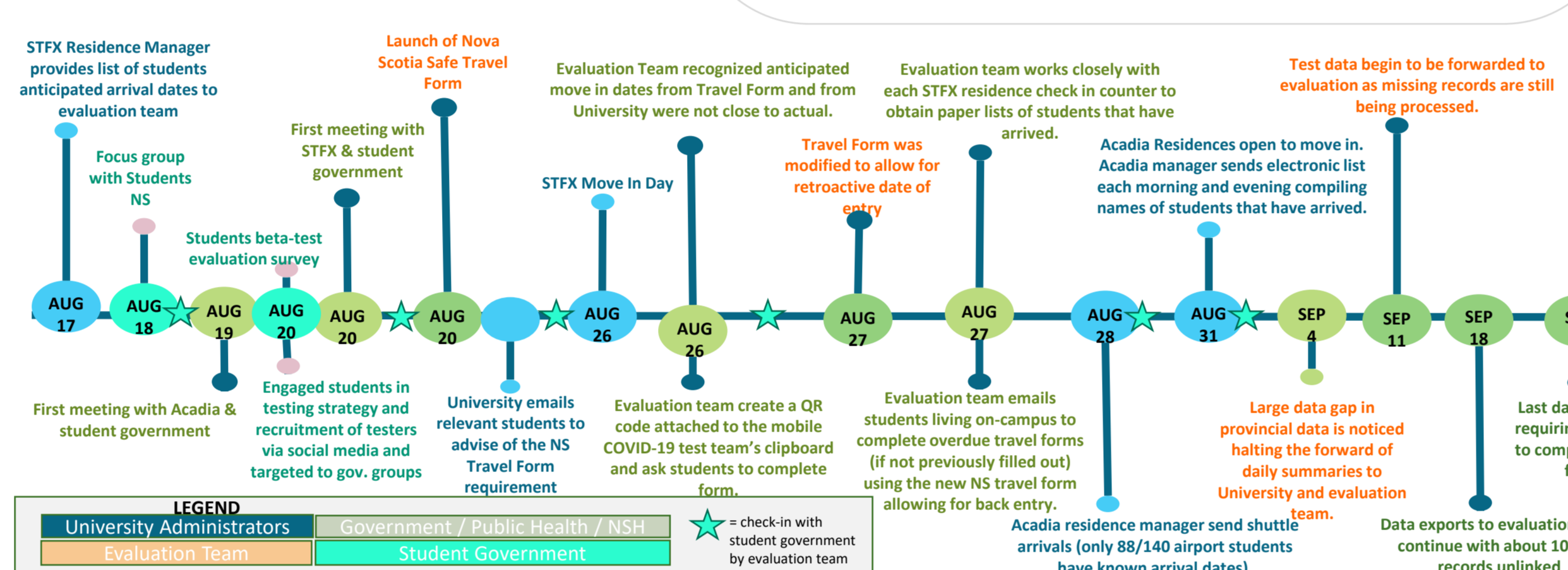
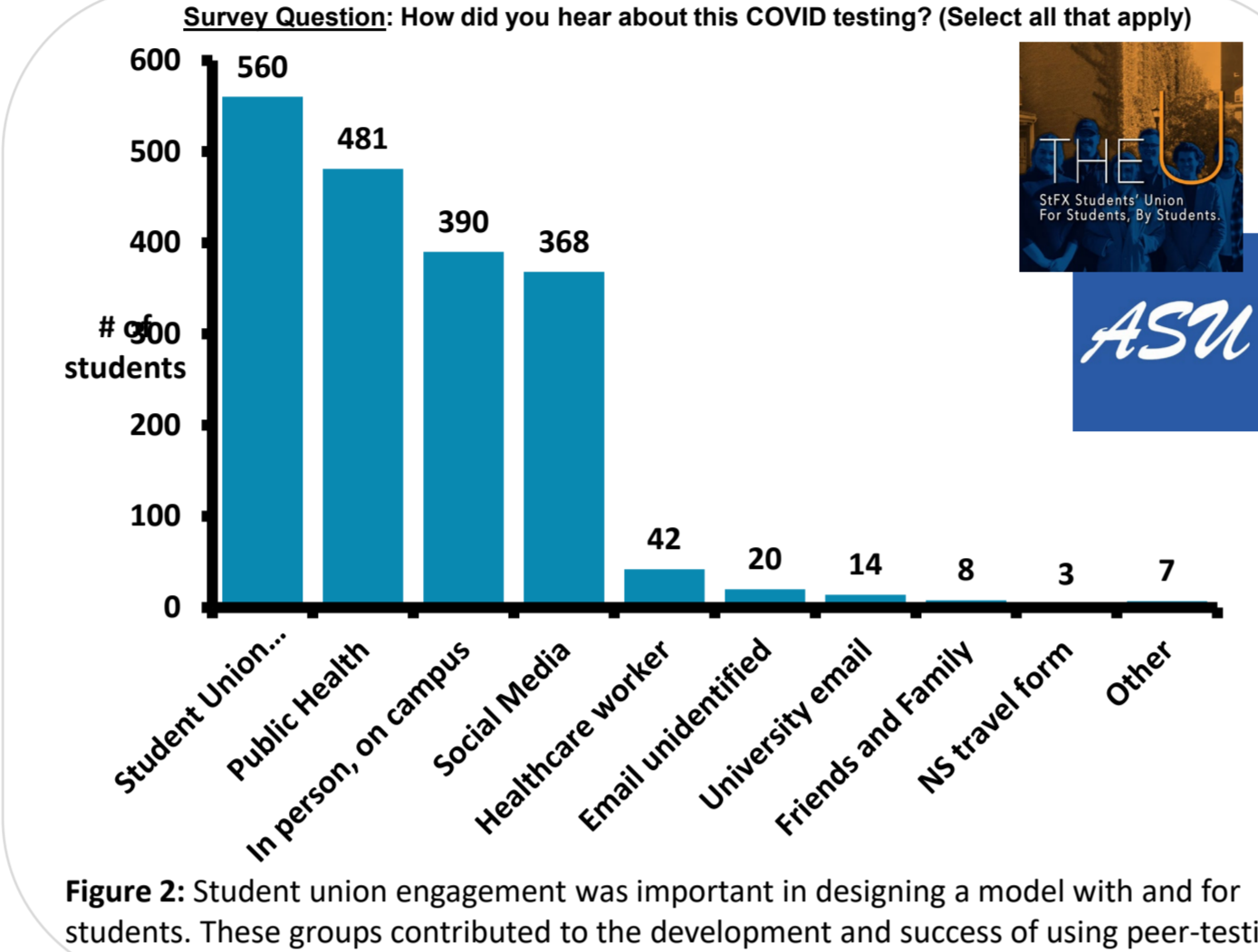
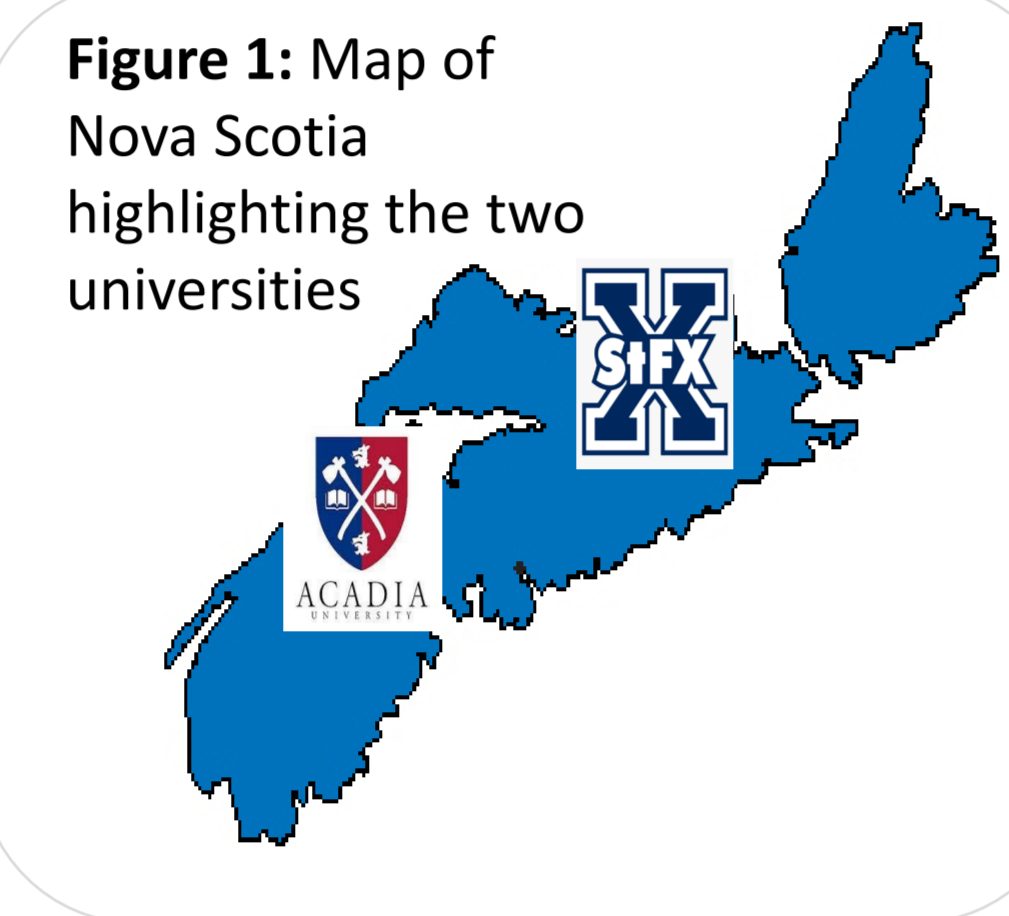
AIM

- Peer-testers can be a beneficial tool in lessening the burden on usual care staff (RNs) and implementing more widespread testing models.
- **We aim to get community opinions on the use of peer-testers (in this case; students opinions) as well as the opinions of peer testers and the nurse educators who train them.**

METHODS

- Developed a testing model with input on the student experience from students themselves and their student unions. Collaborated with the university and local health authorities as well.
- Created a questionnaire intended to gage the student experience. Students were asked to rate their experiences during the testing process. Results regarding their comfort level and opinions on receiving a test from peer-testers or regulated staff members were compiled.
- Peer-testers were hired and trained to administer the nasopharyngeal COVID test alongside regulated health care providers.
- The nurse educators and peer testers were interviewed on their opinions of the peer-testing role.
- The timeline of this initiative spanned four weeks, with a rapid roll-out.

RESULTS



CONCLUSION

- The survey demonstrated that there were no negative implications from using unregulated testers.
- Data indicated that students preferred a casual testing experience, which peer-testers helped facilitate. The population
- These non-regulated professionals were shown to be useful to enhance testing capacity and diminish the burden on regulated providers, as demonstrated by the rapid recruitment and training period of this project.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We have seen success in this testing model of using unregulated professionals for rapid COVID-19 testing pop up events around the province.

- Implemented in Nov 2020 and ongoing.
- The results of this university testing had significantly contributed to the implementation of these events.

The implications from this project can potentially be further applied to populations such as long-term care or corrections facilities, large businesses, airports, etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Dr. Barrett's research team, the collaborating universities, and Nova Scotia Health.
- The peer-testers who put their heart into this initiative and made it all happen (some pictured below)



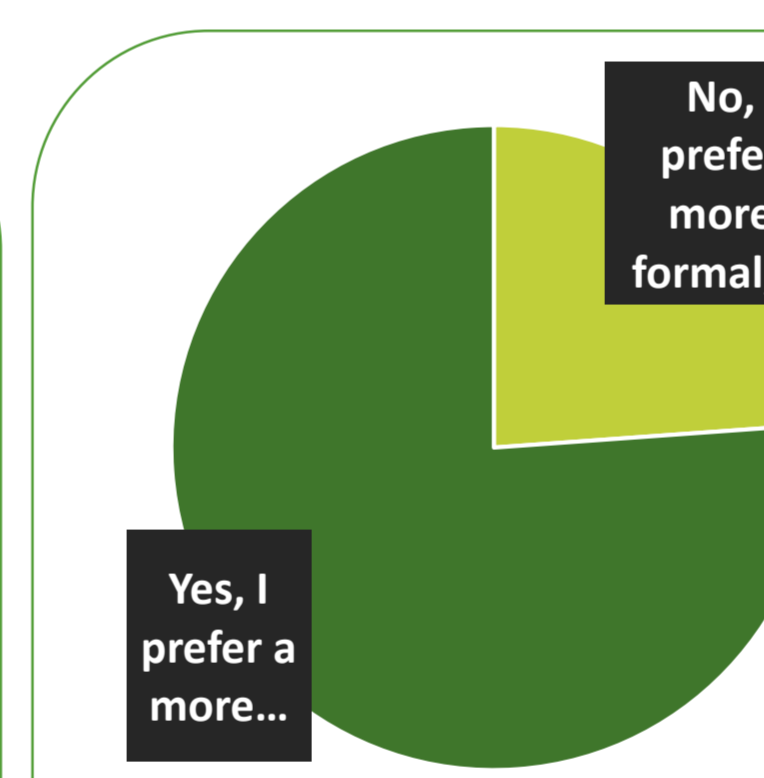
STUDENTS FEEDBACK

Table 1&2: Self-reported symptoms on student's survey's show that 80-90% of students reported no symptoms when receiving their COVID-19 test on days 6 and 12.

A truly asymptomatic population allows for appropriate use of peer-testers in a low-risk environment.

SURVEY 2			
Multiple symptoms	Number of students	%	
0	1062	98.11	
1	37	3.35	
2	8	0.54	
3+	0	0	
Grand Total	1106		

SURVEY 3			
Multiple symptoms	Number of students	%	
0	1080	80.90	
1	27	2.43	
2	2	0.18	
3+	2	0.18	
Grand Total	1111		



Strategies such as using peer-testers, playing music during testing, and having at-home testing rather than clinics, were all employed to help create a more casual experience.

Survey Question: Would you prefer the testing experience to be more casual?

NURSE EDUCATOR'S FEEDBACK

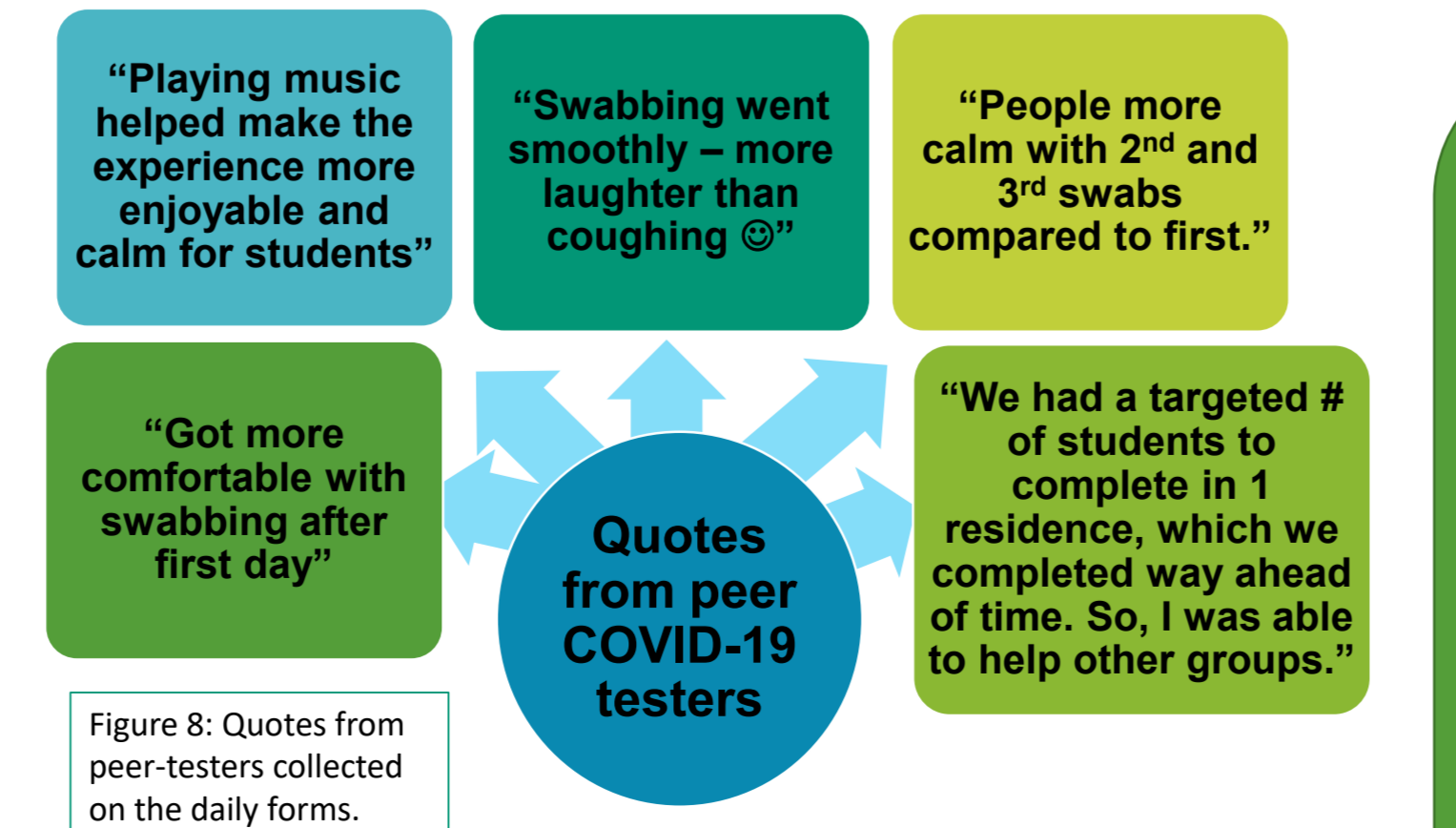
Feedback collected from 4 nurse educators from both STFX and Acadia.

1. What was your impression going into the project?
2. What were your methods used for training?
3. Did you experience any roadblocks or challenges?
4. Did you experience any highlights or successes?
5. Any differences between training regulated and unregulated people?
6. Overall how do you feel about the project?

Figure 7: Interviews with Nova Scotia Health Authority nurse educators give feedback regarding training, successes and challenges, and overall opinions of unregulated peer-testers.

Most responses indicated that the nurses were proud of the innovative approach, were impressed with the skill set peer-testers acquired, and had minimal modifications in their training approach.

PEER TESTER'S FEEDBACK



Over 100 peer-testers were recruited through student union engagement using social media and targeting interest groups

- By August 21st, Acadia provided 47 student applicants for the peer tester position. Acadia provided 15 additional student applicants on August 31st.
- By August 23rd, STFX provided 33 student applicants for the peer tester position. 1-2 dozen applicants continued to apply throughout testing period.
- Applicants included mostly current students from all educational backgrounds (Arts, Sciences, Business)
- 29 Peer-Testers were hired and trained for Acadia University
- 15 Peer-Testers were hired and trained for STFX University

