

students **NS**



# Students Nova Scotia Overview

# Agenda

## StudentsNS 101

- *What, Who, Why*
- *Mission, Vision, Values*
- *Governance*

## From Students to Government

- *Our Approach & Process*
- *Student Issues*
- *Research & Policy*
- *Results*
- *2023 Priorities*

## Relationships with StudentNS

- *StudentsNS and You!*
- *Observership 101*
- *Timeline*



***The What,  
Who, How,  
and Why***



# 20,000 Students Strong.



## Who We Are

- A **nonprofit** association
- A **nonpartisan** advocacy organization
- Founded in 2003 as the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations
- A **democratic**, member driven organization
- Post-secondary student associations across the province
- 20,000 students total

## What We Do

- **Represent** post-secondary students to the provincial government
- **Research** student issues, create solutions, and produce reports
- Raise awareness for student issues
- **Advocate** and lobby to improve the post-secondary education system
- Host conferences, provide training for student executives

# *Vision & Values*



Students Nova Scotia envisions a Nova Scotia post secondary education system that is **accessible**, **affordable**, and **of the highest quality**, and **includes students in decision making**.

## *Mission*

**To represent the collective interests and priorities of post-secondary students in Nova Scotia we:**

- **conduct research** to identify issues affecting the accessibility, affordability, accountability and quality of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia;
- **develop credible and constructive policy** to address these challenges;
- **communicate research and policy** to both educate and affect the opinions of stakeholders, Nova Scotians and government;
- **lobby the government** to affect their post-secondary education policy;
- **organize campaigns** to effectively articulate the needs and interests of our members; and
- **build partnerships** to accomplish our vision.

# Governance



## Board of Directors composed of 2 representatives from each member student association

- **Board sets the direction of the organization**, determines annual priorities, projects, oversees financials and staffing
- Board creates committees and executes plans, and assists with **advocacy, research, and media work** of the organization
- Board members can be as involved in the day to day work of the organization as they want!
- **Board of Directors meets bi-weekly via teleconference and a minimum of 4 times in-person throughout the year**

## Board of Directors **ELECTS** the Chair & Vice Chair of the board, appoints Committee Chairs & Members

- Board elects two board officers in May: **Chair & Vice-Chair**
- Chair & Vice-Chair are the leaders of the board and organization
- **Chair & Vice-Chair do not represent their student associations, rather they represent StudentsNS on the Board**
- After Chair & Vice chair elections, Chair & Vice-Chair schools may appoint 1 additional board member
- Committee chairs/members appointed after officer elections

# Committees

## Policy Committee

- Oversees and conducts policy and research
- Updates old policy
- Recommends new policy areas
- Conducts research into student issues
- Produces policy positions / papers
- Works with ED to create Advocacy Document / Budget Submission

## Governance Committee

- Oversees, creates and updates governing bylaws and operational policies of the organization
- Ensures internal stability of the organization by reviewing governance processes

## Membership Committee

- Works on brand recognition, recruitment, and internal and external communications
- Demonstrates value of the organization by producing swag and informational materials



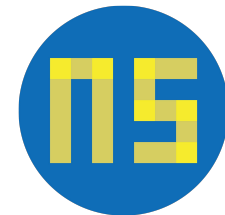


*From Students  
to Government*



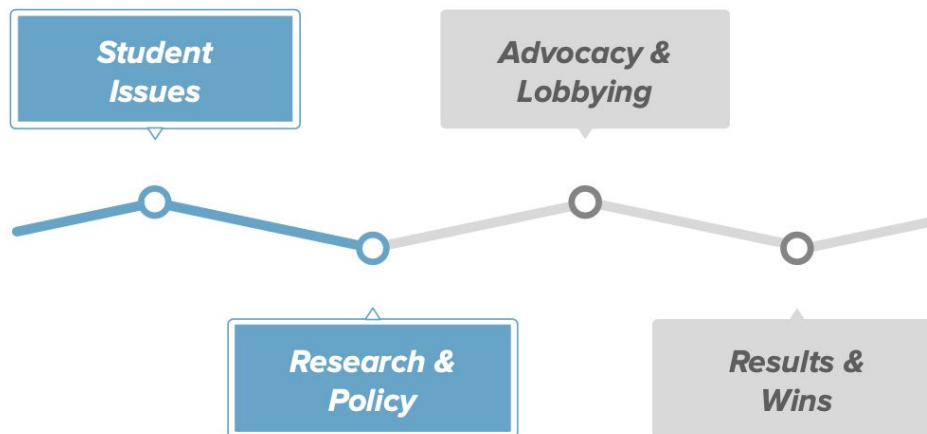


# Our Approach



## Our Work

- Professional, non-partisan
- Build relationships with all political parties, civil servants, stakeholders, and university admin
- Focus on student issues
- Well-researched & realistic solutions to student issues



# ***Our Process***

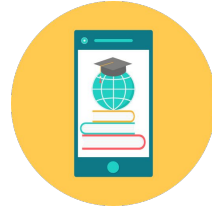
- Board of Directors selects broad themes to focus on each year: affordability, accessibility, quality
- The Board narrows themes down to specific issues
- However, work is done on a broad range of other issues through consultations, research and partnerships
- Through research and policy the Executive Director and Board then create realistic recommendations for government to improve those issues



# ***Student Issues***



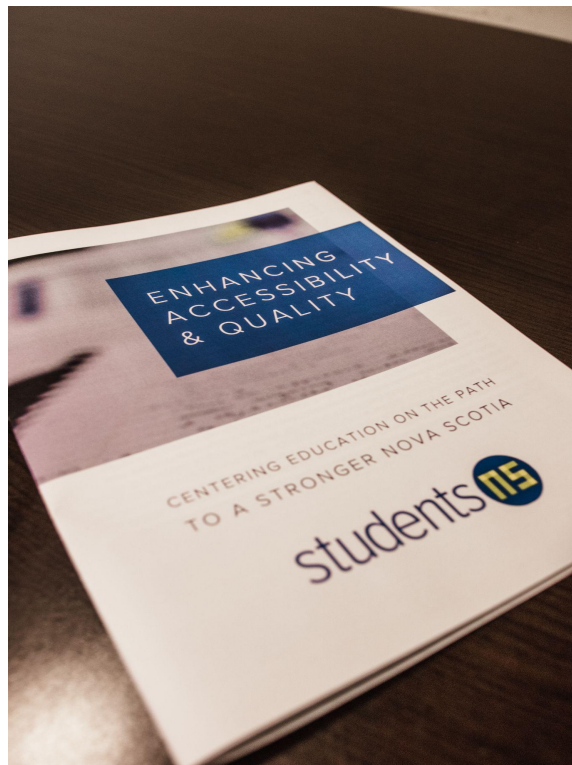
- Issues faced by students and specific to the student experience and/or post-secondary sector.
- Can be wide-ranging and intersectional but remains relevant to students



## **Examples Include**

- Tuition
- Financial Aid
- Debt
- Employment
- Textbooks
- Experiential Learning
- Mental Health
- Sexual Violence
- Campus Accessibility
- Housing
- Quality of education
- Underrepresented groups
- And many more...

# Research and Policy



(2023) **Who Goes, Who Pays? An Examination of Barriers to Postsecondary Access**

(2023): **The Memorandum of Understanding: Student Recommendations for a Sustainable University System**

(2022): **Investing in Our Future: Student Recommendations for Nova Scotia Postsecondary**

(2022): **Shared Perspectives: Student Financial Assistance**

(2022): **Student Recommendations for a Provincial Student Housing Strategy**

(2021) **Enhancing Access & Quality: Centring Education on the Path to a Stronger Nova Scotia**

(2021) **The Impacts of COVID-19 on Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia**

(2020) **Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Supporting Students During and After COVID-19**

(2020) **Investing in Our Future: Supporting Students as a Key to Nova Scotia's Post COVID-19 Recovery**

# Research and Policy

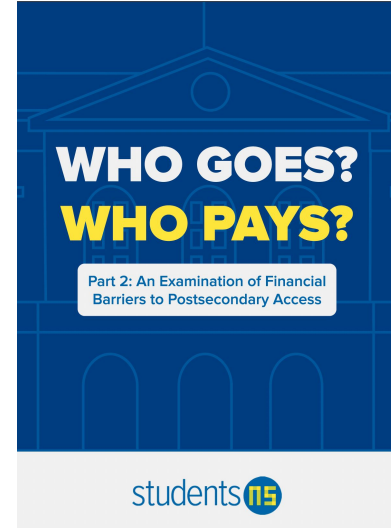
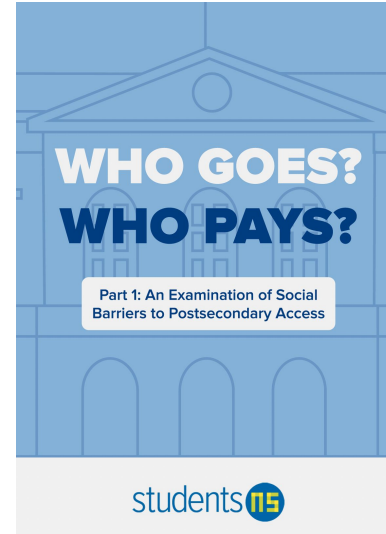


## Internal Research

- Issues faced by students and specific to the student experience and/or post-secondary sector
- Can be wide-ranging and intersectional but remains relevant to students

## Organizational Policy

- Our stances and statements about ongoing student issues that help inform the research we undertake
- A great area to solicit student feedback!



# Advocacy & Lobbying



## Advocacy vs Lobbying

- Advocacy is “public support for a particular cause or policy”
- Lobbying is “specific advocacy efforts attempting to influence legislation”
- StudentsNS does both!



### We Advocate by:

- Raising awareness for student issues
- Working with the media
- Building relationships with other sector stakeholders and partners
- Creating campaigns
- Providing input on Government Consultations

### We Lobby by:

- Building relationships with government, political parties
- Meeting with Government and political parties
- Advocacy Week conference: last year, over 20 meetings with MLAs and Ministers
- Providing a Budget Submission



# Our History: Results



## 2014

- Graduate student scholarships created, ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000
- Interest eliminated on student loans for graduates who remain in Nova Scotia, saving students \$800 on average



## 2015

- Creation of GTO program, incentivizing businesses to hire recent graduates
- Creation of NSCC student-gov round tables



## 2016

- Student loan repayment increase: \$20,000 to \$25,000
- \$1,000,000 invested into graduate scholarships
- \$2,000,000 invested into co-op program, creating 750 new positions for students
- \$2,700,000 invested in SVP, hiring of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner at CBU



## 2017

- \$3,400,000 invested into student financial aid, increasing weekly loan limit from \$180 to \$200
- Creation of Innovate to Opportunity
- Expansion of Graduate to Opportunity to focus on underrepresented groups





# Our History: Results

## 2018



- \$500,000 invested in post-secondary mental health, adopting our direct recommendations
- \$300,000 invested into Co-Op education
- \$1,700,000 increase to Graduate to Opportunity
- \$20,000,000 to create Research Nova Scotia

## 2019 (MOU Recommendations)



- \$600,000 invested in postsecondary mental health
- \$470,000 invested in postsecondary SVP
- Loan forgiveness expanded to all NS student loans
- Mandated student consultation within the MOU
- Diversity Bonus for COOP, GTO

## 2020



- Investment of \$1 million into CO-OP Program
- Extension of Loan Forgiveness to NSCC Students

## 2021

- One-time COVID-19 Bursary (~\$600) to all Student Financial Assistance Recipients
- Creation of Provincial Student Housing Strategy

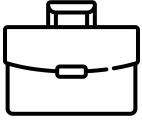


## 2022

- One-time Bursary (\$875) to all Student Financial Assistance Recipients
- Removal of 31-day restriction on int'l MSI eligibility
- Increased Repayment Assistance (\$25,000 - \$40,000)



# The Present: *Advo* 2023



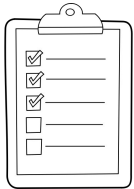
## 2023 Wins (to date)

- Secured funding for the OER repository program
- Happipad home sharing program announced



## What's up next

- MOU 2024
- Advocacy Week 2023
- Our birthday!

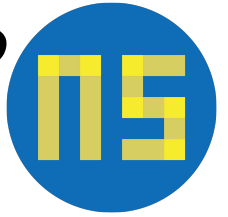


## Current priorities

- International student supports
- Housing
- Accessible tuition policy
- Sexual violence prevention



# What Does it All Look Like?



**StudentsNS** @StudentsNS · Feb 22  
 Today, we had the opportunity to speak before the @nsleg's Standing Committee on Human Resources alongside @NSLAE on the topic of affordability for post secondary students post-pandemic.  
 The full recording can be accessed at [youtu.be/EiPatUjFjo](https://youtu.be/EiPatUjFjo). #nspsae #nspoll



! the Vote campaign encourages students to their voices heard

es for students include affordable housing, employment, and mental

https://www.cbcnews.com/Politics/Nov-27-2021/6:00-AM-AT-1.6411641/ Nov 27, 2021

**StudentsNS** @StudentsNS  
 Thank you @globalnews for affordability challenges in  
 #nspsae #nspoll

## Media Engagement

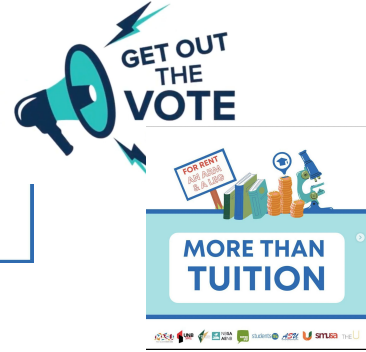


## Relationship Building & Meetings



## Communicating with Students

## Campaigns



# ***Relationships with StudentsNS***



# StudentsNS & You! (DSU)



## Summer 2023

- SNS x DSU Exec
- Provided media training, advocacy training, Nova Scotia political climate review
- Prepped for government meetings and news interviews



## Fall 2023

- Presentation to Council
- Observership overview
- More opportunities to work together



# Observership 101



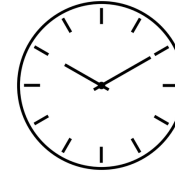
## What is Observership

- **Two years** of formal engagement with StudentsNS
- **Experience** what StudentsNS has to offer and gather input from executives councils'
- **Opportunity** to engage in discussions with other members regarding StudentsNS and their SU
- **Evaluation** of whether StudentsNS meets the advocacy needs of your association

## Why Observership

- **Gain** a better understanding of StudentsNS' operations, policy & advocacy goals
- **Attend** StudentsNS conferences, events, meeting and more
- **Collaborate** with other member organizations to raise your campus issues and solve problems
- **Advocate** and lobby for your students on a provincial scale to improve their post-secondary education experience

# Observership Timeline



## **Date of Approval**

- This is the date upon which the StudentsNS Board of Directors formally approves your application to become an observer. This officially begins the two-year timeline of your schools observership with StudentsNS

## **SNS Check-in**

- The StudentsNS Executive Director will organize an informal check-in with you to add scheduled meetings/Conferences to calendars and answer any initial questions you may have

## **Advocacy Week**

- This is Students Nova Scotia's largest conference of the year and is held in our province's capital of Halifax, typically during the month of November. During this week, StudentsNS meets with Members of the Legislative Assembly, Ministers and stakeholders to advocate on behalf of students.

## **SNS Check-in**

### **Transition Conference**

- Incoming Board members are educated on the role of Students NS, and how the organization will work over the next year. This conference is held at a different member school each year on a rotating basis

## **SNS Check-in**

### **Annual General Meeting/AGM Conference**

- Board of Directors completes their priority setting for the year. StudentsNS also hosts their Annual General Meeting during this conference. This conference is held at a different member school each year on a rotating basis.

## **Repeat for Year 2 (presentation to Council)**

# Students Nova Scotia OBSERVERSHIP ROADMAP

## INTENT

In accordance with your organization's internal governance processes, you must submit a letter of intent to the Chair of StudentsNS ([chair@studentsns.ca](mailto:chair@studentsns.ca)) and complete the observer agreement.

1

## RECOGNITION

StudentsNS' membership will decide whether to approve and ratify your request to join at its next meeting.

2

## AGREEMENT

The Chair of StudentsNS shall forward the decision of the Board of Directors, alongside the signed Observer Agreement (if applicable), in writing within 14 days of the date the decision is made.

3



**4**

## **PARTICIPATION**

Once you sign the agreement, **YOU'RE IN!** You are now able to attend board meetings, conferences, and advocacy meetings.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

At any point during your term of observership, your association/union may apply for full membership status.

**5**

**15**



***Questions?***

***Comments?***

***Concerns?***