

Dalhousie Student Union

Special General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 – Dalhousie Student Union Building, Room 303

CALL TO ORDER at 4:52 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Quorum was determined to be present.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION 2015-02-25: A01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted as circulated.

Moved: Ali Calladine **Seconded:** Scott Rairdan

MOTION 2015-02-25: A02

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be amended to include executive reports after the motion

Moved: Sagar Jha **Seconded:** Dylan Ryan

MOTION 2015-02-25: A02: FAILED

MOTION 2015-02-25: A01 CARRIED

3. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

MOTION 2015-02-25: C01

Be it resolved that a letter received from Students Nova Scotia be read.

Moved: Bart Soroka **Seconded:** Amelia Mackenzie

Jenn Nowoselski explained that the letter was addressed to council and to the Chair in confidence. We should respect the fact that it was addressed to council.

Bart Soroka asked if there a separate email address for the Council Chair and Chair of the Special General Meeting.

Daniel Smith explained he solicited Students Nova Scotia to send him something so that he could properly represent both sides. He said it was asked to be read out, so he will read it out if the Chair does not.

Amelia Mackenzie said it was also sent to her and she supports it being read.

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Ramz Aziz said it was addressed to council.

Jacqueline Skiptunis explained that it was also sent to the Gazette, so she doesn't believe it was supposed to be a secret. She said she has no problem having it read aloud

Julian MaGuire said if this letter is to be read at council regardless, the meeting should just move on. He explained he doesn't think it's the SGM's decision whether or not to read aloud.

Jesse Ward said that Students Nova Scotia just sent a link over twitter to where they have published the letter on their website.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION

Be it resolved that the assembly move to a vote on MOTION 2015-02-25: C01.

Moved: John Hutton **Seconded:** Jomel Varghese

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION 2015-02-25: C01 FAILED

Assents: Bart Soroka, Elizabeth Croteau

4. MOTIONS SERVED WITH NOTICE

A. Motion to terminate membership in Students Nova Scotia

MOTION 2015-02-25 N01

Whereas the Dalhousie Student Union By-Laws allow for a General Meeting to be called when a petition signed by 100 members of the Dalhousie Student Union is presented to the President; and

Whereas General Meetings are one of two ways that individual members of the student union are able to set the direction of the Union

Whereas the issue of the \$95,000 students currently pay to Students Nova Scotia is an important issue for the general student union membership; and

Whereas Students Nova Scotia requires notice of any changes to membership by March 1; therefore

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We, the undersigned, petition the President of the Dalhousie Student Union to hold a Special General Meeting at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, February 26, 2015 [sic] for the sole purpose of debating and deciding on the following item motion:

Be it resolved that the Dalhousie Student Union terminate its membership in Students Nova Scotia.

Moved: Aziz **Seconded:** Letendre

Daniel Smith said that he asked Students Nova Scotia how many meetings have been attended by DSU representatives and apparently DSU representatives have missed six meetings out of 16. They have missed these meetings and left early. How can people say Students Nova Scotia is not representing Dal when Dal is not representing Students Nova Scotia.

Jomel Varghese said that there have been folks approaching me asking about Students Nova Scotia. Are we leaving because they did not support the Day of Action? Varghese said that is one of the reasons, but that is not the only point. There are many things we need to consider before we leave. The two things put forward as reasons: dentistry and the Day of Action. Should these been the only reasons we should leave SNS? Varghese said there should be a list of reasons why we should leave SNS. He explained he is not advocating for a yes or no vote. He said we have more money available if we leave and we don't know what we're going to do with it. He said he wanted to make sense of what we're going to do with this money.

Mahbuber Rahman explained that the \$95,000 paid to Students Nova Scotia includes a dedicated fee. If we decide to leave SNS, the DSU would stop collecting that fee. The other part is paid by the DSU operations budget; around \$40,000. He said that Dal students have trusted the DSU with a \$2.8 million budget. Part of our budget this year was increasing support to societies and the members. This year's VPFO will be elected, so during the election period you can ask them what will be done with the money. Rahman explained that the budget will be approved by the council. It's not just one person making decisions about this money. He said he thinks the DSU is moving in the right direction.

MOTION TO LIMIT DEBATE

Be it resolved that debate be limited to 30 minutes, with 2 minute speaking times, alternating between speakers for and speakers against.

Moved: Daniel Smith **Seconded:** Jomel Varghese

MOTION TO LIMIT DEBATE CARRIES

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Yazan Matarieh said he is in favour. He said that Varghese highlighted a good point: who knows what Students Nova Scotia is doing? He think that's the issue. There was only one presentation from them this year. He said he has had more engagement from the Canadian Federation of Students than from Students Nova Scotia. We are the largest numbers in SNS, which means we need to be influential. What our council is doing, SNS is largely against. Students not knowing what they are doing is not the fault of us but the fault of Students Nova Scotia.

Bart Soroka said his is opposed to the motion. He thinks we need to hear more from the organization we are talking about. He said trying to bring information to campus is difficult if you don't have the campuses' engagement. From the info he has been provided, it looks like the DSY has not been attending meetings so it makes it hard for Students Nova Scotia to give us what we need. If we want to have an engaged campus, we need to be accountable.

Mitch Broughton said he is in favour. If Students Nova Scotia is an external advocacy organization, they are doing a terrible job. They haven't dealt well with issues of misogyny or racism. He says he doesn't think we need to be part of any group. We can do it ourselves

Elizabeth Croteau said she is against the motion. She explained that there is no actual definite plan for what we are going to do with the money. If we don't have a plan, we don't know what to advocate for. There was suppose to be an Advocacy Committee from February 2014 and we don't know what to stand for as it never happened. SNS is focused on a single goal of advocacy. It's one voice. Advocacy is not a zero-sum game. We can advocate here while Students Nova Scotia does the "heavy lifting" petitioning. We can't blame SNS for us not knowing about them.

Jacqueline Skiptunis explained that it's not \$95,000 that will be coming to the union; we would not collect the levy anymore. Skiptunis explained that the DSU been in attendance for basically everything. We actually had two people at the table most of the time. She said she has been reaching out to talk about Students Nova Scotia and to connect them with students.

Brogan Corruthers says she is in favour. She said everyone's been touching on the money issue. If we're voting to stay in Students Nova Scotia, we're voting to stay in with the status quo. She said they are not supporting us on what we want to be advocating for. It's not that we don't have a plan, we have all of us.

Amr ElKhashab said he is in favour. ElKhashab said Students Nova Scotia is a lobbying group and there are fundamental differences between us and them. we cannot work together. If we cannot have a common vision, he said he doesn't think we should continue working together. He said that the relationship has be sour for far too long.

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Hima Merdan said he is against the motion. He said if we leave, students would save \$3 on tuition and lose the chance to advocate provincially against tuition hikes.

Ram Aziz said he is in favour of the motion. If there are any allegations to the quality in his performance it hasn't been brought to his attention. He said that his questions is: are we getting a good return on \$95,000? He said we are not.

Bill Crowley said he is against the motion. He said that as a former student leader, as someone whose worked as a consultant for student groups, he said he thinks it's a really bad idea to leave Students Nova Scotia.

Aaron Beale said that he is in favour. He said that people should beware of people who defend Students Nova Scotia without actually talking about the organization. They support fee increases for international students. The DSU been lobbying for the differential fees be decreased, but Students Nova Scotia puts out a report recommending that differential fees should go up. They say that universities are adequately funding, when It's obvious we're underfunded.

Jomel Varghese said he is against the motion. He asked what has the DSU done for advocacy?

Shay Enxuga said he is in favour. What can advocate for Dal on our own. He said that while coming together in a group has more power, he hasn't heard what good things Students Nova Scotia are advocating for, just that they are against reducing tuition fees and in support of the Ivany report, which has some terrible recommendations.

Amelia MacKenzie said she is against the motion. She explained that her personal experience with Students Nova Scotia was positive. She said she reached out to them and they were very interested in following up and being engaged..

Ali Calladine said she is in favour of the motion and wants to put a positive spin on leaving Students Nova Scotia. She said the Day of Action was amazing, we were not paid and later got funding from the DSU. Imagine if we had funding for that. We also had the discussion about divestment; and none of this cost \$95,000.

MOTION TO EXTEND DEBATE

Be it resolved that debate be extended until the current speakers list is exhausted.

Moved: Jenn Nowoselski **Seconded:** Scott Rairdan

MOTION CARRIED

Abstentions: Jomel Varghese, Julian MaGuire

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Alex Killham said that the South House has circulated a letter that they wrote last year. South House met with Students Nova Scotia about the Mend the Gap campaign and asked them to include the issue of sexism in the campaign and they disagreed.

John Hutton said that this is an important year in advocacy. He explained that the Students Nova Scotia President came to a Dal Students Against Fee Hikes meeting and he laughed at their literature and insulted a member.

MOTION 2015-02-25: N01 CARRIED

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 2015-02-25: A03

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the General Meeting be adjourned,

Moved: Jasmine Proulx **Seconded:** Alex Killham

MOTION 2015-02-25: A03 CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM