

## **DSU President**

Report for the period *May 1, 2019 – May 22, 2019*

### Current projects:

#### **Council**

- *Organized May 22 Council*

Much of the work I did this month has been organizing council. This work should have been done by the DSU Council Chair; however, the previous Executive did not complete the hiring process and, therefore, I took on that role as stated in the DSU's policies and by-laws. Only a handful of council positions were selected through the general elections, and so I reached out to representative society and worked with them to ratify a council representative for our first meeting. As it stands, there are some major inconsistencies with the DSU's elections policy, and this is something I plan to address by starting up the Ad Hoc Elections Review Committee. In years past, many council seats had gone unfilled and so it was a priority for me to ensure that we have a robust council to enshrine student engagement and transparency in the work the DSU does moving forward.

- *Chaired May Council Meeting*

I developed the agenda in consultation with the other Executives and set the dates and locations for council for the rest of the year. I also communicated with the councillors and worked to accommodate their accessibility needs such as teleconferencing and travelling reimbursements. I did some meeting prep and brushed up on my Robert's Rules to affectively chair the meeting. I have also been looking for the last two council meeting minutes which have not been submitted yet by the previous Executive team. I will continue to be the stand-in chair until one is appointed by council.

#### **VPAE Stand-in**

- *Administration Relations*

Starting the term off, we had a vacancy in the VPAE position. After a discussion with our Executive, it was determined that I would take on all the Admin Relation work. This included Senate, the Code of Conduct Task Force, supporting international students engaging with Dalhousie Administration after the #notDalBound campaign. I am also working on the DSU's general strategy for engaging with Dalhousie Administration to lobby for a student-centric approach in all the work they do. Taking this work on top of my presidential duties as well as my role as the chair was a matter of balancing priorities. With my lack of a transition from the out-going President as well as incomplete record keeping, I've been doing a lot of catch-up work.



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## Strategic Planning

- *Executive Strategizing Session*

One of my priorities this year is to build up a long-term plan for the DSU in which engagement, empowerment and enrichment of the student experience is enshrined within the DSU through an anti-oppressive framework and a mandate for social justice. During election, my Executive and I had the opportunity to engage with students across all campuses, from different disciplines and lived experiences, and hear about the issues and concerns of students. Our Executive and I are working on figuring out how to address these issues and the priorities students have as well as address the systemic issues within the DSU's structure that have contributed to the lack of trust that currently exists between the DSU and Dalhousie students.

## International Student Engagement

- *#notDalBound Wins and DSU Support for Next Steps*

Building off the momentum of the #notDalBound campaign, I've been working with DISA, the International Student Representative on council, Sara Goswami, and the general Dalhousie international student population. There are many wins that students should be celebrating that came directly out of international students and their allies organizing. DISA now has a permanent office space in the International centre thanks to the organizers of the campaign who also diligently engaged with Dalhousie administration throughout the campaign to ensure that students' asks were being communicated to the university. A rapid task force was also struck to address student issues that came up during the campaign. The Board of Governors (BOG) also voted to create a task force to consider the adverse effects of the 44.4% tuition fee increase and senate is developing a globalization strategy as well to address these and other concerns relating to international students. It is clear that student organizing does indeed work, and I am super glad to have been a support to the students organizing as the incoming DSU president. Since then, I have met with key stakeholders to discuss what comes next and how the DSU can support international students moving forward. We identified key areas in which students can engage better with the DSU including orientation week, our various committees and being representatives at Dalhousie administration spaces. We have also started developing our first issues policy which will be on international students' issues. The international student representative will be chairing the working group and get that ball rolling.

## Admin Relations

- *Admin Meetings*

I attended our bi-weekly lunches with the Student Affairs team where we can bring up student concerns as well as projects we would like support with. I also attended the



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Dalhousie President's welcome dinner for the incoming DSU executive and other engagements that the administration invited us to.

- *Senate*

As a student senator, I will be sitting on the Senate Planning and Governance Committee on top of my duties to sit as a senator on senate. Due to the lack of transition I received from the out-going president, I setup a meeting with the senate officers to orient myself with the role of senate and its obligations as well as the relationship it has with the DSU. I have been working to ensure that student representatives attended all the senate committee and subcommittee meetings taking place and started the work of recruiting students to sit on senate for the year.

- *BOG*

I attended my first Board of Governor's meeting for the May special BOG meeting in which the incoming Dalhousie president Dr. Seep Saini was ratified.

## Committee Updates:

### **Hiring Committees**

I organized and chaired the hiring committee for my presidential commissioner, and sat on the hiring committee for the VPSL commission. I also chaired the hiring committee for the council secretary. As this position is an appointment, we will be bringing forward the hiring committee's recommendation to council in June to appoint if council so chooses to. I am also the chair of the hiring committee for a council chair and that process is still on-going. It is my goal to have a recommendation for council by the June council meeting for this position.

## Presidential Commissioner Updates:

My commissioner so far has been supporting me in the various projects I've been working on. I've assigned her various miscellaneous tasks from reviewing relevant policies to combing through the out-going President's files.

## Additional Information:

### **Transition Challenges**

- *Lack of Transition*

Unfortunately, I did not receive a one-on-one transition with the out-going President Aaron Prosper. Although I made myself available to meet since April 15 and emailed my

availability to try and setup a meeting, I got no response from the out-going President via email or Facebook Messenger. The out-going President also only attended one or two transition meetings that other out-going Executives attended so I did not get much of a chance to speak with him. Once I was finally able to get a hold of him in the second week of May, I attempted to schedule two meetings which he did not attend. The last meeting, I attempted to schedule on May 14, the out-going president confirmed three different times that he could make it and then never showed up nor did he reach out and send his regrets or provide an explication for why. After that, I decided that it was a waste of my time to continue attempting to reach out and have been working to learn the role on my own. Policies that were not followed in the Executive Policy include 8.3 as well all the subsequent subsections (8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.3) and 8.4. Policy 8.3.1 requires “A two-week period with the outgoing and incoming Executive working together full-time.” Policy 8.4 states that “Each member of the Executive is obligated to orient their successor during the transition period.” However, because I received a transition report – which was incomplete and provided minimal relevant information, the out-going’s president’s final cheese was released.

- *Organizing Files and Trying to Figure out What took Place Last Year*

The out-going president left very few files – hard copy or otherwise - and left the President’s office unorganized. I spent a few days going through the paper files to see if I can find anything to elucidate what came out of the president’s office last year. Minimal records were kept by the out-going president – and nothing in any chronological order which I could make sense of - which made my job difficult. I am unsure of what exactly came out of the president’s office last year other than the annual survey. I will continue to attempt to figure this out and report back to council with updates.

- *Transition Session Overspending*

The in-coming Executives transition schedule and sessions were developed by the out-going Executives and full-time staff. One of the sessions organized was a two-part conflict resolution training facilitated by the organization New Leaf. These two sessions came to up to \$6,300 + HST. The incoming Executive did not require this training, nor did we request it. Furthermore, this expense was a waste of student’s money and never should have been authorized and pursued. I had a chance to speak with our staff about it and expressed that this year’s Executive will be more financially responsible with student’s money especially when pertaining to spending done on behalf of the Executive. Once the Executive found out about this expense, we quickly cancelled the second session and opted to run our own Executive bonding and strategic planning session.