DSU Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

Building our Equitable Futures Today

Strategic Planning Committee Report

May 2020

Aisha Abawajy
DSU President 2019 - 2020
To the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Membership,

We are excited to present the DSU Strategic Plan for the years 2020 - 2025. We have heard from thousands of students over the years, witnessed the struggles and dreams of our student body, and have seen students continuously take on the task of organizing to support their peers and uplift their community as a whole. Our goal is to represent you, be here for you when you need support, and amplify your voices to the highest levels of governance on the issues that matter to you most.

It has been a very eventful year at the DSU. Reforming an institution takes a lot of work, time and energy, but the results are definitely worth it. I am fully confident that restructuring the full-time staff structure of the DSU has and will continue to allow for a more optimal DSU. The DSU should be working with our members and inspiring each and every one of us to take building our equitable futures into our own hands. Students have historically been the spark of social change and the DSU has the potential to be a catalyst for current and future activists to make a difference.

This plan is emerging at a turning point in our community, and likely a turning point across the world. Students are taking the initiative to advance our knowledge and skills with the goal of bettering their community. However, we are burdened with the financial, physical, and mental costs of going through this colonial white supremacist capitalist patriarchal system. Costs which disproportionately impact our student body and can impact our ability to achieve our educational and professional goals. We are in a time of uncertainty - a feeling which many students are already incredibly familiar with. We've seen the government prove, by excluding one-third of the student population from accessing benefits they need to cover costs of living, that our interests and lives are considered expendable. Today it is international students being left out of CERB benefits - who will be left out tomorrow?

Your education should be engaging, fulfilling, and a time for personal growth and exploration. We hope to see every student feel fully able to have the experiences and develop the skills and knowledge they wish to acquire. In order to manifest these realities, it is vital that the DSU continues to listen and adapt to the needs of our students. In the same way the challenges that our students face are complex and layered, so should be our solutions. In this strategic plan, our priorities naturally overlap and intersect as we try to remove the barriers our student body faces using a holistic approach. In complex times, our Strategic Plan intends to act as a guiding light that will keep us principled, adaptive, and focused towards an equitable future for all students.

Sincerely,

Aisha Abawajy
Strategic Planning Committee Chair
Part 1: Values, Vision, Mission & Mandate

Mandate Statement

The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) is a democratically elected member-based organization that acts as the main representative body of the Dalhousie student population to the University Administration. We serve almost 19,000 students across four campuses in accordance with our Act. The DSU provides resources and services to our members, offers student employment opportunities and advocates for better services, the elimination of tuition fees and safe, inclusive and enriched environments for students to learn, socialize and build a community in. The DSU supports members through events like O-Week, DalFest and Mental Health Week, supports nearly 300 student-led societies and provides services and resources such as the Survivor Support Centre, Campus Copy, the Grawood and T-Room and advocacy services ranging from academic support to issues based policies such as our International Student Policy.

The DSU’s role extends beyond the student body, our students spark social change in their communities and many of our students and societies take an active role in bettering our local community. As the collective voice of our student body, the DSU is a dedicated network of students here to advocate, support, entertain, and represent you. Our mission is to serve the students who need our services most and prevent students from falling through the cracks of a broken institution. We are aware of the bigger picture - an equitable post-secondary education system - and consistently consider how we can improve and adapt our practices to achieve our goals. We will ensure all students are uplifted in our path towards a collective future.

The DSU advocates for student rights, builds community on campus through events and by supporting nearly 300 societies, and provides discount services to save you money!

Mission Statement

Our mission consists of five strands, as we aim to...

1. Advocate for the interests of our membership and bring their voices and priorities to the table through campaigns, supporting direct action, and lobbying to Dalhousie University and all levels of government.
2. Provide lasting benefits in the lives of students and our wider community by enabling students to build their skills, capacities, and networks through student societies, participatory governance, and employment or volunteer opportunities.
3. Offer services, businesses, supports, and resources that are relevant, meaningful, and promote the overall wellbeing of the student population.
4. Create space for students to build community, relax, and enjoy themselves in a safe environment, and enable the student community to create these spaces for themselves.
5. Promote social transformation and justice by centering our work within an equitable framework and continuing to re-shape our values, practices, services, and spaces to ensure we’re prioritizing the most vulnerable within our communities.
What even is the DSU?

- A member-based organization
- Official representational body of Dalhousie Students
  - To Dalhousie Administration
  - To Government (municipal, provincial and federal)
  - To External organizations
- Student-centric approach to supporting Dalhousie Students
- Fully autonomous and separate body from Dalhousie University
- You could call it the student council for Dalhousie.
- Except we are NOT a government → we are a union with its own unique governance structure.

So, What Do you Actually Do?

- We advocate for our students and their communities
- We act as allies on the multiple fronts of oppression
- We support our members by providing on-campus services and resources
- We engage in social justice organizing
- The DSU’s role extends beyond the student body. Our students are a spark of social change in our community.
- Advocate on behalf of students to the Dalhousie Administration and all levels of government.
- Support student societies and serve their members
- Create relevant programming
- Compile and share resources

DSU Services

- Food Bank
- Farmers’ Market
- Equity & Accessibility Office
- Survivor Support Centre
- Health & Dental Plan
- Bar Services, Grawood & T-Room
- Campus Copy
- Tiger Patrol
- Grants & Sponsorship
- Food Services
- Equity & Accessibility Office (E&A Office)
- Sustainability Office (DSUSO)
- Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service (DSAS)
- Society Membership
- Space Booking in SUB
- DSU Community Closet
What Can Members get from the DSU?

- Fun and safe place to make friends
- Skill building opportunity for students
- Part-time student-centric jobs
- Networks of students – societies and resources
- An avenue to amplify your voice
- Representation at the Dalhousie Board of Governors and Senate
- Advocacy Initiatives taken on behalf of the membership

Strategic Plan Scope

The strategic plan will encompass the mandate of the DSU for 5 years, when it will be reviewed, updated and another 5-year plan will be put in place. The Strategic Plan ensures the functioning of the Union and offers institutional knowledge and guidance to future Council, Executive, relevant staff and members.
Part 2: Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priorities

The strategic planning Committee has developed five strategic priorities for the DSU and ratified by Council on April 8, 2020. These priorities are:

1. Our Education: Our Priority
   You’re here to learn, and we’re here to make sure nothing stands in your way!

2. Centering the Margins
   Challenging the status quo in order to right historical wrongs!

3. Building Collaborative Community
   You can’t spell union without U and I!

4. Tackling Food Insecurity
   Students are hungry for more than just knowledge, let’s build solutions together!

5. Student Mental Health & Wellness
   School is already stressful for students, supports shouldn’t be because no degree is worth paying with your health!

Our Education: Our Priority

You’re here to learn, and we’re here to make sure nothing stands in your way

The Challenge & Why this Matters

We are all here to get that paper. The one commonality we have is our mission for education and knowledge seeking for the betterment of ourselves and our community. Whether that takes the traditional four years or more, at the end of the day we’re all here to get an education. We are part of an ever-changing world where more-and-more, employment is tied to post-secondary achievement. Currently, 70% of jobs require some form of post-secondary education. We know the adage “knowledge is power” and “education is the key to success”. What’s becoming increasingly clear is that post-secondary education is becoming more-and-more relevant to the economic development of communities today. However, the way the education system is currently structured leaves many behind.

It’s important to acknowledge the histories of exclusion that existed within the post-secondary realm. Post-secondary institutions were not made for Black, Indigenous, and Students of Colour, for femme students, for students with disabilities, or for queer and trans students. The existence of these students in our post-secondary spaces should be celebrated, amplified, and structurally supported on all fronts. It’s important to note that current funding requirements for post-secondary institutions leave many behind. It is a privilege to even be a post-secondary student and with that privilege comes responsibility. There is a responsibility to advocate for those who are systematically disadvantaged. Our
interest with this priority is to examine what our education looks like today and the areas in which improvements can be made. A fully accessible, equitable, quality and robust post-secondary education is what we all deserve.

When advocating for our educational rights - there are many fronts to this fight. It’s important to understand the various bodies and the powers they hold to effectively advocate for change. We believe in a fully accessible post-secondary education for all and that can only be attained through a national strategy. It can be difficult to advocate for this without representation on a federal level. It’s also imperative to work with the provinces and municipalities to ensure that our education curricula and physical buildings become accessible, equitable, and representative.

**The Vision:**
A fully accessible, equitable, and quality education to all students who walk through the doors.

**The Aim:**
Educate members on their rights and advocate for accessible, equitable, and quality education. Advocate to the Dalhousie Administration on behalf of students for services, resources and systemic change that will enhance their education.

**How we can Actually get There:**
- Elimination of Tuition Fees
  - Elimination of international student differential fees
  - Reparations Tuition Model: Access for Black & Indigenous students. Phase 1: Mi'kmaq and Historic African Nova Scotian learners receive tuition-free education. Phase 2: All Indigenous and Black learners receive tuition free education
  - Removal of hidden course costs: Tophat/some textbook formats expensive and are an additional barrier of access.
- Decolonize Dalhousie: Moving Beyond a Land Acknowledgment
  - Reimagine EDI policies at Dalhousie. Implementation of EDI policies by certain faculties have been flawed.
  - Implementation of TRC recommendations
  - Full divestment
  - All faculty, staff and administration undergo cultural competency and anti-oppression training
- Diversify the Classroom
  - Hire and retain faculty & staff that are representative of population
  - Representative curriculum that’s diverse and quality
- Support Students Navigating the Institution
  - Ombudsperson position should be brought back
Robust Feedback Mechanisms for students. One About profs course evaluations: SRI’s have proven ineffective to support students currently within a course - and often doesn’t result in any changes in other iterations of the course. Another About Administrative policies, procedures and structures

Create comprehensive easy to understand guides explaining Dalhousie vs. provisional gov. Vs. federal gov. Decision-making structure. In order for students to actively take their education into their hands. They need to understand the structures at play.

Built-in Supports for Students
- Reduce workload for students (students are currently overworked)
- Career planning and CO-OP support: professional development
- Make resources on research opportunities

Centering the Margins

Challenging the status quo in order to right historical wrongs

The Challenge & Why this Matters

Oppression and inequality are barriers to post-secondary education in both access and retention. That’s why it is imperative to fight inequities on campus and in the broader society. Human Rights and the value of all people being equal is a widely accepted societal norm - yet that is not always put into practice. Anti-oppressive framework is a fundamental value of the DSU and a mechanism to recognize the inequities that exist and the responsibilities to right them. An anti-oppressive framework must be grounded in the realities of historic injustice and the on-going legacies that play out in society today. It is about understanding that oppression and injustice take place not only on an interpersonal level, but also at an institutional and systemic level. According to Bell Hooks, the problem within society today is a colonial, white supremist capitalist patriarchy. We are at a point in human history where we are well aware of the historic injustices of the past. Dalhousie’s report on slavery, Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and so much more academic and official documentation exists adding the realities and previously and purposefully hidden injustices out into the open. So what do we do about it? What is our role as the inheritors of this history? Both the descendants of colonizers and the oppressed are caught in the intergenerational consequences. The realities of marginalization for specific demographics of society are the direct consequence of centering the colonizers and their descendants. And so to move away from that we must centre the margins. What does it mean to centre the margins? It means focusing on communities that have been historically and systemically marginalized. With the understanding that when those communities are focused on, we’re all focused on.

Our bylaws and policies did not come out of the objective ethos to create a student union for everybody. The DSU was formed in 1966. Before the last residential school in Atlantic Canada was closed decades later in 1997. Dalhousie university was built on slavery. The gaps between academia and historically marginalized communities are clear. The system has been structured to leave out certain populations and that legacy exists today. It is our duty to identify these structural inequities and address them.
The vision:
An equitable campus community

The Aim:
Bridge the gap between historically marginalized communities and the status quo by empowering and supporting those located on the margins.

How we can Actually get There:

- Knowledge is power: education is empowering
  - Anti-o trainings for societies
  - Train students to be equipped to provide peer-to-peer support
  - Create awareness campaigns
  - Build up Diverse representation in student leadership
  - Building a strong, diverse student senate caucus
- Action through resource allocation
  - Provide support to Council community reps
  - Divest Dalhousie
  - E&A at O-Week
  - More adequate Prayer space in the SUB
  - Utilize resource of space by providing organizations with a mandate of representing/supporting historically marginalized with free/discounted space in the SUB
- Create the culture we want to see
  - Partnering with societies that have anti-o/cultural serving mandates to create relevant programming. Support societies with equitable mandate like DalOut and BIPOCUS.
  - International & Domestic Student Solidarity
  - Clearly communicate with membership when issues intersect on marginalized identities
  - Naming & Advocating against systemic oppression at Council
  - Attend and support solidarity rallies hosted by organizations in the community
- Supporting International Student support
  - Develop DSU International Issues Policy
  - DSU becomes an Atlantic Immigration Pilot Designated workplace
  - Collaborate with International Centre to fill in the gaps around
  - Immigration consultation
  - Provide relevant resources to prospective and incoming students around required paperwork
- Indigenous Student Support
TRC and MMIWG2S Report implement recommendations
Paying rent to Mi’kmaq nation: could look like scholarships and/or reparations
Commitment to decolonization efforts
Reconciliation (which has recently been declared as dead by Indigenous youth)
Develop Indigenous students’ issues policy

Black Student Support
Develop issues policy
Reparations for Dalhousie being built off the back of slavery
Support BUSA (Black United Students Association)

2SLGBTQ+ Support
Altering name and pronouns in the university system - thru senate.
Homophobia & transphobia in residence
Policy and procedural defense against discrimination

Accessibility
Housing Insecurity
Dalhousie accessibility audit
Alcohol-free spaces
Survivor support/reduction (elimination) of sexualized violence and gender-based violence
Food accessibility → Halal, kosher, and other special dietary restrictions having more options on campus.
Develop Reproductive rights issues policy
Religious accessibility

Building Collaborative Community
You can’t spell union without U and I!

The Challenge & Why this Matters:

It is no surprise to anyone that a lot of students do not truly understand what the DSU is. The DSU is a complex organization with many moving parts but at the centre of it all the DSU is a community hub for students. The importance of a community cannot be stressed enough. Many correlations have been made between a sense of community and mental health, retention, and higher grades. Therefore it’s in everyone’s best interests to better promote the DSU. The first step in building a sense of community is better promoting the supports, services, and resources that exist at the DSU. This strategic plan is a first step; however, more work needs to be done to make the DSU governance structure clear, and what decision-making bodies are responsible for. A clearer understanding of how the DSU operates can support the building up of ownership our memberships feel towards the DSU. The DSU previously had a website (Tiger Society) and app (DSU App) that allowed members to see all the societies that existed, learn more about what they do and ways to contact the society. Both of these services were
pulled down - the app was supposed to substitute the website. Then the app was deemed not useful yet no new avenue to reach student societies was created. Times like these are a reminder as to why

The vision:
A united student community

The DSU’s Aim:
No point in replicating the wheel, we are stronger together. Pooling our collective skills and strong suits to build vibrant community supports and connections.

How we can Actually get There:

- **Build a Sense of Community on Campus**
  - Actively promote the collaboration of like-minded societies, community organizations and students
  - Educate students on what community resource are available to them
  - Councillors hold semesterly town halls with their constituents
  - Host semesterly society mixers

- **Support Societies as the Lifeblood of the DSU**
  - Community care events
  - DSU app and/or website dedicated to showcasing all DSU societies so students can engage directly with them
  - Revamp area on the 3rd floor as a society resource cabinet.

- **Intercampus Collaboration and Support**
  - Society expo on Agricultural and Sexton campus
  - DSU Bus students to campuses hosting events

- **Empower Student Engagement**
  - Support the Street Squad
  - Robustly promote DSU committees
  - Presidential Committee

- **Education as a tool of collective empowerment**
  - Providing first aid training to levy/faculty societies
  - Utilize Member Services training sessions to encourage collaboration and community building
  - Bridging the gap between academia and marginalized communities
Tackling Food Insecurity

*Students are hungry for more than just knowledge, let’s build solutions together.*

The Challenge & Why this Matters:

Throughout our consultation we’ve heard from a wide range of students about their difficulties accessing healthy and competent food. Food insecurity impacts physical and mental health, and students often are forced to choose between food and essential expenses related to their academics. We are paying for university not only with our money, but with our physical health and mental wellbeing. We know that students are concerned about the future in many different ways, including environmental sustainability. Food security encompasses affordability and nutrition but extends beyond these aspects. In order to hold a holistic view of food insecurity, we need to ensure students have access to sustainable, culturally appropriate, readily available, diverse, fresh, and high-quality food. We are extremely proud of our DSU Food Bank, the DSU Market, and the levied society Loaded Ladle, but understand that services such as these can only go so far on their own in supporting our students and their needs. There is also a lot of structural support needed for the longevity of these services to continue to exist. Students need more accessible, affordable, fresh, and diverse food options on campus. Immediate supports for those facing severe food insecurity must be put in place while we also focus on long-term supports that ultimately address root causes of food insecurity.

The Vision:

Food Security across all 4 Dalhousie Campuses - all students have access to adequate nutrition, dietary requirements, and culturally relevant food that is affordable and locally produced (when possible). A sustainable approach is key so that members do not have to worry about the long-term impacts of our buying habits.

The Aim:

Work towards a long-term plan that is structured and supported that allows students to have access to foods regardless of their monetary situation while supporting current needs of students.

How we can Actually get There:

- Data Collection
  - we need to get a comprehensive image of how students are doing on our campuses and where they are falling through the gaps. We need to understand the reality of food insecurity on our campuses.
  - Collect and develop Dalhousie specific data to contextualize the reality of food insecurity on our campus. Conduct relevant research to build up a case for institutional support and funding
- Collaboration & Positive Deviance
- We need to analyze our operations, local operations, and the solutions being developed in similar institutions to capitalize on our successes and build up solutions based on relevant precedent. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel, but we can support initiatives already taking place on our campuses.

- Implement the Food Collective as outlined by the DSUSO Report on Food.

- **Fully Self-sufficient DSU Market**
  - One full-time staff to run it.
  - Marketing and advertising support from DSU Comms team
  - Breakeven, better funding structure.
  - Try to get running it as a co-op student or course credit, potentially in management or sustainability to support operations

- **Viable DSU Foodbank**
  - Sustain a robust Volunteer base.
  - Hire part-time food bank coordinator with 15h/week

- **Advocacy to the university and government**
  - Options in residence, meal hall hours, access to cookware and cooking space, culturally appropriate food/dietary needs.

- **Reducing stigma of food insecurity**
  - Create a campaign to tackle issues around food insecurity including stigma around being insecure
  - DSU campaign to tackle food insecurity (Highlight what the DSU does)
  - Foodbank reality campaigns

- **Build-up the DSU’s Structural Capacity**
  - Foodbank funding structure within DSU created
  - Define Foodbank structure within DSU
  - Define Market structure within DSU
  - Policy and procedure created to institutionalize Foodbank
  - Policy and procedure created to institutionalize Market
  - part-time food insecurity coordinator
  - Full-time staffer hired

- **Prioritize Sustainable Food Access**
  - Partner with local farmers, food associations and organizations
  - Implement reusable container program as outlined in the DSUSO Food Report
  - Build partnerships with local organizations to support foodbank
Student Mental Health & Wellness

*School is already stressful for students, supports shouldn’t be because no degree is worth paying with your health!*

The Challenge & Why this Matters:

Stress, anxiety, and sleep difficulties remain the top 3 issues affecting Dalhousie Students performance according to research conducted by Dalhousie (Campus Budget Forum, March 2020). Talk to any student who has accessed the Dalhousie Health & Wellness centre. Students share with each other the councillors to avoid at all costs. The current system has limited capacity to serve Dalhousie - and people are falling through the cracks. Often the most marginalized students are the ones to be the least served. Nature of being in university is stressful; students need to be able to be in a good headspace to be in a place to learn.

The Vision:

A campus community that prioritizes a holistic and culturally competent approach to mental health and wellbeing, where people from every sphere have access to support and resources spanning from the president to the newest student.

The Aim:

Improve students' wellbeing by advocating for an accessible, culturally competent, holistic mental health culture on campus, providing educational opportunities for the university community, facilitating alternative and collaborative programing for the student body, and adequately supporting them to access the support they need.

How we can Actually get There:

*Advocacy*

- Building the DSU’s capacity for mental health advocacy by:
  - Forming a Council Student Mental Health Committee that would be responsible for all mental health related work and allow councillors to take a more active role in advocating for Mental Health on campus.
  - Focusing on data collection by complying experiences of students with the current system in place and asking councillors to collect feedback from their constituents.
  - Utilizing the grassroot efforts of mental health focused student societies by highlighting their findings and supporting their work.

- Advocate to the University for increased accessibility by:
  - Adding mental health complementary resources to student-accessible platforms such as Brightspace
  - Continuously revisiting the Sexton and Truro services and increasing advertising on appropriate channels (e.g. syllabi of architecture, planning and engineering faculty classes) to ensure students are aware of the services available to them.
Advocate to the University for better structural and cultural competencies for marginalized groups by:

- Hiring Health and Wellness staff who speak different languages and can facilitate programming to break down stigmas surrounding mental health for international students.
- Following a more equitable hiring process, increasing BIPOC health professionals at the Dalhousie Health & Wellness Centre.
- Educating all counsellors on the importance of cultural competency in their field. This includes education on the institutional and social barriers marginalized students face on our campus and ensuring counsellors unlearn their own biases to better support students.
- Improving support for Black and Indigenous students by including additional financial and academic support for them. This should include but not be limited to specific grants, emergency bursaries, mental health supports, closed spaces and increased representation across all levels of Dalhousie faculty.
- Prioritize pairing BIPOC students with BIPOC health professionals following the student’s request.

Advocating to the University for a shift towards a more holistic approach by:

- Prioritizing harm reduction and safe consumption of alcohol as opposed to adopting a “dry” approach and banning alcohol consumption.
- Integrating better professional development strategies to teach professors how to maintain a positive relationship with their students and those they are supervising.

**Programming**

Facilitate Destressing Programming on campus by:

- Supporting student societies to host regular community care events.
- Expand exam distressing programming - developed by the Member Services Department - to include more distress activities by partnering with local BIPOC organizations across the city.
- Organizing general distressing activities for students, such as bouncy castle, puppy room in the SUB, and accessing green spaces more often, and supporting student societies that do think work.

Maintain communication channels and collect a wider range of feedback by:

- Assuring that The Dalhousie Mental Health Forum is running regularly.
- Hosting a Mental Health town hall on Sexton and Agriculture campuses, to center the student voices and better understand the needs of these unique communities.

**Education**

- Increasing accessibility of existing services by:
- Developing a concise guide to help students navigate all Dalhousie Health and Wellness Services including the Health Plan.
- Distributing guides to various places, specifically the Dalhousie Health and Wellness offices and on various Dalhousie and DSU online platforms.
- Developing resources that help navigate the healthcare system in Nova Scotia for anyone who is not familiar with it.
- Working with the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) on creating an educational package for graduate students to understand their rights and to feel empowered in their work.
- Keeping the membership updated on changes to the DSU Health Plan as well as services in the University and the Province.

Support

- Adequately supporting student in accessing the services they need by:
  - Working with the University to increase insurance coverage and bursaries to access off campus mental health services especially for graduate students, as Dalhousie Health and Wellness services are often at capacity and can be uncomfortable to access for students who have supervision roles.
Part 3: Department & Institutional Structures

Executive Branch

Where we are at now

The DSU Executive Team works diligently to serve and support our members as they fulfill their role. One area of concern in the past has been the unmanageable expectation put on the DSU Executives. Each executive team leaves the DSU depleted, burnt out and mentally and physically drained at the end of their term – this should not be the case. The pre-existing structure created barriers to fulfilling the responsibilities and time requirements outlined in these positions, while maintaining the regular responsibilities of a student. Throughout the 2019 - 2020 year, significant structural changes took place to create broader institutional and direct support for DSU Executives and staff. If the DSU Executive are effectively supported in their roles, the capacity of the DSU will increase substantially and we can better connect to and represent the needs of our members.

Where we can go

Campus life is constantly changing, and the needs of students today are not the same as they were before. There is a need for the DSU to stay attuned with the needs of students, to take a political stance on these issues, and to truly implement an anti-oppressive framework in the work we do. We are living through a climate crisis and are more aware than ever of the historical and present-day atrocities happening in our society and around the world. Challenging social norms and actively working towards a more equitable future for all is a fundamental part of what the DSU Executive work needs to prioritize. Students should know who their elected representatives are, and Executives should be student-facing: attending society events, giving class talks and doing more general outreach and engagement. Ideally, the DSU Executive are the ones responsible for setting goals, dreaming up projects and figuring out what issues and needs the students have. The Executives then collaborate with the two Directors, who take the lead on implementation, logistics, and come up with strategies to tackle the projects. The Directors then oversee their staff executing the initiatives with Executive feedback and involvement throughout the process.

Member Services Department

Where we are at now

The Member Services Department currently has only one full-time staff member (the Member Services Coordinator) and a team of part-time staff (Member Services Assistants). This is a department that has traditionally operated with minimal resources and staff and there is a lot of room for growth. We are excited to see how this department develops in the years to come. Currently, the department has four main areas of focus: the DSU Food Bank, the DSU Farmer’s Market, anything and everything to do with supporting, managing and overseeing the 300+ DSU Societies, and servicing Sexton campus. The Member Services department also provides support for a variety of events under the VP Student Life portfolio including O-Week, Trick or Eat, the Exam Stress Relief Series, and much more.
Where we can go

The Member Services Department’s mandate is two-fold: Societies/Member Support, and Food Security. Ideally, this department would have two full-time staff members who are each responsible for one of the mandates. As Tackling Food Insecurity has been recognized as an essential part of the DSU’s mandate, this proposed position holds significant potential within the DSU. We envision this position overseeing the logistics and operations of the DSU Market and Foodbank. These two services are vital to our student population but have little lasting structure year-to-year and are dependent on the amazing humans who run it. This position would bring together DSU student societies (Loaded Ladle, Urban Garden Society, etc.) as well as DSU Offices (E&A Office, DSUSO, etc.) and other relevant stakeholders across campuses and communities to collectively tackle food insecurity (Food Collective as recommended by the 2017 DSUSO Report on Food Issues). Currently, ongoing work around these issues is taking place in separate spheres. Bringing together stakeholders to support the development of Dalhousie-specific research, educational campaigns, and on-the-ground supports would be a huge asset. Access to affordable, healthy and nutritious sustenance is a basic need and there are so many innovative and impactful ways the DSU could contribute to achieving this goal. See Strategic Priority 1 for more information on specific Foodbank and Market actionables.

The Societies & Support Coordinator would then be able to focus on supporting our students across the four campuses and our 300+ active societies. Our student needs are diverse, and this position would support the execution of student support initiatives as well as create a better baseline for society support. Societies are the life blood of the DSU – it is through societies that most students engage with the DSU during their time at Dalhousie. There are many ways the ratification process, grant application process and training with societies can be improved if given the full attention of a full-time staff person. Furthermore, this would allow for increased proactive communication and consistent engagement with societies. Logistically, ability for the Member Services department to schedule DSU Event staff for events and projects they are working on would be an asset to the department.

Part of the strategic priority Building a Collaborative Community entails creating more opportunities for societies to work together. This position could coordinate a yearlong calendar with all events societies are planning as they get approved and provide incentives for collaboration among like-minded societies. The Society Mixer held by the Society Engagement Commissioner in the Fall 2019 allowed society executives to mingle and give feedback on different topics. This event was a great success with a lot of positive participant feedback; hosting those types of events semesterly would be a great way to build community. Another area of focus for this position would be membership training and workshops. We envision a DSU Workshop Suite developed and coordinated by this position in collaboration with Executive, Staff, and DSU Offices. Education is a tool and capacity the DSU should really lean into. Currently, all societies are mandated to receive Anti-Oppression training prior to ratification, but as of the time this report was written, the DSU has not had a standardized module or the capacity to facilitate this. Currently, Primary Event Organizer (PEO) and Treasurer training are the only sessions regularly provided to societies. There is interest in morphing the PEO training into a more useful Planning Accessible & Equitable Programming Workshop Module which would contain an array of training facilitated by relevant parties. Other training offered within can include the society treasurer training, financial literacy training, how to navigate and advocate to the Dalhousie administration,
consent culture training, decolonizing academia educational workshop and more. The Societies and Support Coordinator would oversee these workshops, as well as explore the needs of the student population to ensure the offerings are relevant to students.

DSU Offices

Where we are now

Currently, the DSU offices include the Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services (DSAS), the Equity and Accessibility Office (E&A), the Dalhousie Student Union Sustainability Office (DSUSO), and the Survivor Support Center. Due to its oversight by a full-time staff person the Survivor Support Center is considered to be distinct from the other offices. The current DSAS, E&A, and DSUSO operate fairly independently with minimal direct oversight and support. Each office acts in accordance with its original levy question and the direction in which its staff choose from year-to-year. There have been years where there is little to no activity from these offices and years where they excel. The Offices Steering Committee - which acts as the current support structure for the offices - operates under the portfolio of the VP Internal. This committee is a recent creation, and acts to review and approve office reports, goal-plans, structure, and hiring, but could still be developed further to best meet the needs of these Offices. Notable activities of the offices this year include revamping the E&A Office structure and mandate, the DSUSO’s Report on Food Issues, and DSAS’ contributions to feedback on the draft Student Code of Conduct. The DSUSO and the E&A Office both have adequate funding through levies; however, DSAS is funded entirely through the DSU’s operational budget. Although it has operated without adequate funding to meet the demands of the student population, this year we were able to significantly increase the funds allocated to DSAS in the annual budget for 2020/2021.

Where we can go

We would like to see each Office review and update their mandate – of they have not already done so - and identify the areas where they align with the DSU strategic priorities. The Survivor Support Centre’s Manager has developed an in-depth office mandate and workplan for the 2020-2021 year based on past year successes and gaps. Developing similar documentation for the other offices is highly encouraged. This would enhance the ability to coordinate collaboration between the Offices, student societies, and the DSU Executives. Under the portfolio of the Director of Research and Outreach, offices are able to access additional support for their overall activities and maintain a lasting strong link to the DSU that is not as strongly impacted by year-to-year Executive changeover. As the demand for its services has seen substantial increases, the DSAS will continue to require funding support and allocation with the DSU budget. This office would benefit from additional funding that would allow them to maintain their independence, such as a levy. As well, the DSU Sexton Office can become a part of the DSU Offices. One aspect we’d like to see these offices continue working on is educating students via social media, compiling resources and staying up to date on the issues taking place around the world. It’s important that students have an anti-oppressive perspective and are able to relate world struggles of oppression to their time and existence at Dalhousie University.
DSU Sexton Satellite Office

Where we are now

In the 2019/2020 year significant effort was put into growing the DSU’s relationship with Sexton campus. We are proud to have successfully expanded some of our services onto Sexton and started the process of rebuilding trust between Sexton Campus and the DSU. The T-Room has historically operated more independently from the DSU than many of our other businesses and services and is a beloved social hub for Sexton students. Mid-way through 2019/2020 a Sexton Coordinator was hired, with input from Sexton stakeholders directly on the hiring committee and made tremendous progress. One highlight was the Sexton Society Expo, which was small but well attended and enjoyed by students. As well, the Sexton Attendants merged with the Member Services Department as Sexton Member Services staff to provide Sexton-specific support to students and student societies.

Significant steps were taken to increase DSU Executive and Council presence on Sexton this year. Office hours were regularly attended in the DSU Sexton Office throughout the summer, and into the Fall until the Sexton Coordinator was in place to act as the official DSU liaison. Council meetings were also held on Studley, Carleton, Sexton, and the Agricultural Campus on a rotating basis. A Sexton Advisory Committee took place in the summer semester, and another meeting was anticipated for the winter semester but was disrupted by COVID-19. Sexton support and the Sexton Coordinator have been placed under the President’s budget and portfolio to ensure this relationship will be maintained in the future as a continued priority of the DSU. It is highly recommended that Executives continue to make an effort to attend meetings and events on Sexton, and communicate regularly with stakeholders in Engineering, Planning, and Architecture.

Where we can go

The DSU Sexton Office should operate similar to our other DSU Offices – as an independent entity supported by the resources of the DSU. A Sexton Coordinator should be hired each year, with Sexton students providing direct input on the hiring committee. Measures should be established to ensure each Sexton Coordinator creates a transition report and is allocated adequate time to train the next coordinator. Similar to the other Office structures, the Sexton Coordinator in collaboration with the DSU or Sexton stakeholders can create and deliver programming and support that meets the unique needs of Sexton students. The Sexton Coordinator should report directly to the DSU President and work with the Member Services Department and Sexton Member Services Assistants to implement their goals. In the next year, the focus of the Sexton Coordinator should be on developing a clear mandate for the office, in order to build a framework for future goal-plans, structural proposals, and projects. Issues at the forefront of student feedback that can be targeted in the next 5 years through this office include affordable and culturally competent food options on Sexton, the lack of study spaces, mental health, and support for International students. This office would then have the capacity to act as the voice of the DSU on Sexton and should be able to utilize their direct experience and consultation with students on Sexton to address their specific needs.
Council & Committees

Where we are now

The DSU Council and Committees are prominent channels where students have a direct impact on the decisions and direction of the DSU. Council acts as the highest governing body of the DSU and is, therefore, where students can have the most impact. In the past, there have been difficulties with having a robust and representative Council, specifically prior to Faculty-level societies gaining the ability to elect their representative internally rather than through the overall DSU Election (changes were made to the Elections Policy 2017/18). Significant work was put in by the DSU President in the 2019 Summer Semester to ensure as many seats of Council as possible were filled by their Society-appointed representatives. One particular gap in this area is difficulty in filling Community Representative seats which do not have an officially recognized appointing body, requiring positions such as the Students with Disabilities Representative, Black Students Representative, and Women/Femme Students Representative to run in the DSU General Elections or By-Elections. This often entails that one or more of these positions are vacant for at least a portion of the year, further marginalizing these voices at the DSU.

Council has historically tended to act as a catch-all for any student concern with or related to the DSU or Dalhousie. There is a lack of clarity around what the DSU even is, what we do and the role that council plays. Discussions and decision-making items are placed on the agenda that would be more appropriately and effectively addressed through Committees, other meetings, or internal DSU staffing structures. These items can often reside outside of the knowledge or purview of Council and disrupt the ability of Council to fulfill its annual responsibilities, function efficiently, and maintain focus on broader overall direction of the DSU. Councillors are the official representative of their constituents and should be in contact with members to raise points and concerns on their behalf. Councillors often don’t have a full understand about these structures and channels themselves and are therefore unable to effectively and efficiently carry out their role. With Councillors not being properly trained and supported, they are unable to then support the overall student membership navigate their concerns. This by and large impacts Councils ability to direct the DSU at the higher level in which council is meant to function. Furthermore, councillors are expected to represent their constituencies in a professional manner, however, the complex relationship between roles as representatives in a governance system and peers in a student community can create complications unique to a student union setting. In some cases, interpersonal issues may manifest into or otherwise impact Council discussions and decision-making.

A strength of the 2019/20 Council has been in approaching systemic issues through writing statements in solidarity and taking public stances in support of marginalized student communities, which often pass with minimal debate and a focus on collaboration with stakeholders on and off Council. However, it is difficult to ensure consistent long-term contribution and engagement both in Council and its Sub-Committees. For a variety of reasons, some Councillors are minimally engaged with Council, Committees, and their direct Constituents. Due to gaps in communication and consultation, there has been a disconnect between constituents and their council representatives. Members have been bypassing their councillors to directly engage with council – which beats the entire purpose of a representational positions. Low engagement on the Committee level is particularly of concern, as these spaces are essential for the operation of the DSU and should play a large role in developing consultation, discussion, and decisions prior to agenda items being presented at the Council level.
Where we can go

There is a lot of potential for the DSU Council to improve its ability to fully represent the interests and voices of our student population. Ideally, students will feel equipped and comfortable bringing questions, concerns, or issues to the attention of the DSU, through their Council representative as their main avenue of access. Every single student is represented by one (or more) Faculty or Community Representatives - as well as operationally by the DSU Executive at Council. Members are also represented at Dalhousie’s highest decision-making body through the two Board of Governors Representatives (and President). Councillors should be knowledgeable of both DSU structure and the needs of their constituents and should feel equipped to engage in consultation and bring forward the voices and concerns of their constituency. This entails engagement around both academic/University structural considerations and social issues that disproportionately impact their constituents.

Essential to the representative ability of DSU Council are the Community Representatives. These include the Black Students Representative, the International Students Representative, the Women’s/Femme-identified Representative, the 2SLGBTQ+ (DalOut) Representative, the Indigenous Students’ Representative, the Students with Disabilities Representative, and the Residence Students Representative. Some of these representatives have the backing and support of their appointing society, but others do not currently have this type of structural support. Further, some of their constituents may not be aware of or engage directly with them. It is imperative that these representatives are provided support and resources to be able to connect with their constituents, be available for student support, and raise awareness of their role within their community. Supporting the creation and/or recognition of appointing bodies and ensuring that Community Representatives have access to the necessary resources will ideally lead to increased interest in holding or engaging with student leadership positions. Many students want to represent their members, have a seat at the table, and bring change to the DSU for their constituents - and it is the DSU’s responsibility to decrease the barriers they face in achieving this. In practice, this could look like support in organizing town halls, collaborations, or providing social media and outreach support to engage their membership. The DSU could advocate on the University-level for Community Representatives to have access to statistics and information on students who are within their constituency. In addition, for Councillors who do not have access to society funding or support, this could look like providing access to a pool of funds that would enable them to host events and do the work of engaging with and representing their constituents.

Furthermore, there are many Council Committees that make important decisions on the operations and activities of the DSU. Often these Committees are attended exclusively by Executives and Councillors due to difficulty in recruiting and retaining engagement from the General Membership. It is imperative that both Councillors and General Members understand the role of these Committees and the value of contributing to their operation. The approach to this can be two-fold: by increasing the promotion, advertisement, and accessibility of information about Committees and by more effective and appropriate use of these Committees. The key to student engagement at this level is ensuring that members feel informed and empowered to contribute and allowing them to contribute in ways that feel important and meaningful. This will allow the DSU to further improve its overall operations and gain a more holistic understanding of the membership. Additionally, Councillors should be encouraged to strike Ad-hoc Committees to address issues or act as a working group on topics that may arise through
the course of the year. These topics may not have an existing appropriate avenue or may be better addressed through the capacity of a Committee rather than by an individual or at the council level.

A robust structure for Council and Committees, which adequately trains its contributors and clearly delineates responsibilities and decision-making power, is essential for democratic operation and participatory governance. Increased awareness of DSU and Dalhousie structures would empower students to bring their voices forward, while allowing the DSU to more easily discern between offhanded or bad-faith commentary and genuine student feedback or concern from those who may not be aware of (or be adequately served by) existing avenues of consultation and redress. Our goal is to provide students who wish to see and/or contribute to change be able to navigate the channels that currently exist and use them for the betterment of the whole student body.

Bar and Food Services

Where we are now

The DSU operates two campus bars, the Grawood on Studley (which operates out of the SUB), and the T-Room on Sexton campus. In the 2019/2020 year, Bar Services underwent significant changes and the DSU no longer manages or oversees the service of alcohol on campus beyond events held within the Student Union and the T-Room. The scaling back of these operations was the result of decisions made by the University Alcohol Advisory Committee but has significantly decreased costs across Bar Services departments and increased the DSU’s capacity to focus on developing the structure and operations of the Grawood and T-Room.

In recent years many campus bars have seen stagnation or reduction in attendance, sales, and bookings - and increased competition by University-run or local establishments. The Grawood has historically run a significant deficit, requiring funds to be used to offset these losses rather than for new or expanded student services. The creation of the Director of Operations position intended to, among other things, address this issue by integrating the operations of the campus bars more closely with the other operations of the DSU. This has been a step towards further development of the structure of the bars, with a focus on balancing the ability of student staff to shape programming and operations while ensuring manageable workloads, adequate staff support, and appropriate decision-making structures.

The Grawood has been able to maintain recurring specials and events, such as Trivia and Sex Toy Bingo, but a majority of programming (and, as a result, clientele) within this space is not representative of the diversity of the student population. Events, programming, and services are typically geared towards, and attended by, white domestic students. Additionally, since its creation The Survivor Support Centre has made contributions to create a safer campus bar. Being cognizant of the prevalence on University campuses of sexualized violence, alcohol abuse, and how these issues interact is essential for ensuring our bars are able to operate as safe spaces moving forward. Our student bar staff are skilled in serving alcohol safely and bring their unique perspective and experiences as students. However, there is still a lot of work that can be done to support student staff in managing complex issues and situations and to shift the culture both within our bars and across campuses.
The T-Room has not been as drastically impacted by trends in decreased attendance of Campus bars, and rather is seen as a social hub for Sexton students. Student staff at the T-Room, who are students on Sexton, have managed a significant portion of the operational and programming needs. Feedback suggests that many students feel this space provides programming and regular operations that are relevant to them. The needs of students on this campus are unique, and therefore direct contribution from Sexton students in T-Room operations appears to be imperative for continual success. There can tend to be mixed feedback on suggested improvements to the T-Room, but it would certainly benefit from more direct DSU support on logistical operations and communications through the DSU’s Sexton Satellite Office. Additional suggestions brought forward by Sexton students have been expanding hours to allow use as study space, expanding food options, and increased operations during the summer months. As well, there is room to improve in supporting consent culture through the T-Room and specialized measures to better serve the large International student population on Sexton.

Where we can go

A substantial priority for both campus bars going forward is student safety. The Grawood and T-Room should lead by example when it comes to consent culture, which entails a holistic approach including (but not limited to) preventative measures, educational and awareness campaigns, and survivor-centric operations, policies, and practices. Another prominent aspect of student safety is harm reduction and a wellness-based approach to mitigate and address harms associated with binge drinking and alcohol abuse. Substance use and abuse is a significant concern on most University campuses, and our goal is for our campus bars to operate as a safe and accessible alternative to drinking downtown, in residence, or at off-campus house parties. Implementation of best practices and policy around alcohol harm reduction should be a focus of DSU Bar Services and DSU advocacy around University Bar Services.

As both a harm-reduction measure and a way to expand the diversity of bar events and patrons, there is room to increase and improve the range of dry and all-ages programming. First-year students often lack fun and accessible programming and can be the most vulnerable to the risks and harms of drinking culture. These events provide an opportunity for students who are not of legal age, students who choose not to drink, or students who are recovering from (or struggling with) substance abuse to connect with peers in a safe, accessible, and comfortable space. Additionally, developing a menu of non-alcoholic drinks (at reduced cost) would allow students who do not drink to feel more welcome and provide an option for those who may feel pressure to appear as though they are drinking.

Ensuring that both bars can operate as supportive spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ students, BIPOC students, and International students, and other student communities that are historically underserved is also essential moving forward. It is important that Bar Services have diverse student representation, both in terms of staffing and an increase in student/society-led programming that meets the varied interests of our membership. As well, all those involved in bar operations - from security, to staff, to event hosts - should be aware of and take measures to mitigate situations or actions that could further discourage students in marginalized communities from engaging with the Grawood and T-Room. Dal AfroFest was a huge success this year and is one example of what BIPOC-centered programming can look like. Programming like this is very needed and highly requested by our membership, while also increasing our base of clientele. Another example would be programming focused around sports that are not as popular domestically but have a huge following from the International student population, such as soccer. Drag shows have also seen a rise in popularity and could provide opportunities for
students to hold paid performances at a venue accessible to them. Continuing to partner with societies and constituents to plan and host events would further increase the reach of these services. A step for further consultation would be to launch a survey or other outreach around what type of ongoing events or programming students would like to see, particularly students who disproportionately do not visit our campus bars.

Furthermore, a structure in which societies are able to host events in one of the bars for free once a year, similar to how the McInnis Room functions, would be a way to support student-led programming and diversify options for students. The costs of these bookings can be offset by increasing costs for external groups who wish to book space. Having the student bars as accessible as possible for our constituents to host events will both increase awareness of and revenue to our services, while supporting student safety in tandem with other harm-reduction and consent-based measures. Accessibility is super important and initiatives like alcohol-free drinks, culturally competent food, more events that aren’t 19+, security that’s trained to not be racist, etc. are just a small set of ways in which this can be achieved.

The T-Room is a space that could expand its hours of operation, and potentially incorporate daytime food services to meet students’ needs outside the hours of the single cafe on Sexton. Development of the use of T-Room space should be done with direction and feedback from the Sexton Coordinator, T-Room staff, Director of Operations, and other stakeholders as to what daytime uses could look like and what other areas of improvement may exist. Recent discussion has centered around use as study space, chill/hangout space, and expansion of Loaded Ladle services into the T-Room. In summary, our vision for the DSU Bars is student-centric. A service run by students for students that is a hub for all our diverse students on campus.

**Workplace Culture**

*Where we are at:*

The DSU is not immune to the systemic injustices that negatively impact all levels of our society. Many organizations across the city, and many student unions across the country, have begun taking steps to identify and address how the structure of their organizations creates and reinforces inequities, regardless of the best intentions of staff. As our society shifts to become more aware and accountable, we have an obligation to our members and staff to be leaders in addressing systemic injustice in a meaningful way. The DSU has long known of many problems that needed addressing. Specifically, workplace bullying, sexism, racism and social cliques are systemic issues that are consistently identified within the DSU. The restructuring process has been one part of the process of tackling these issues. Additionally, with both the full-time and part-time staff unionizing in 2019, some of these issues will begin to be addressed in the years to come – but it will be up to the Executive to set the expectations and examples that can truly create lasting change.

The portfolios of the Director of Operations and Director of Research and Outreach were developed, in part, to centralize Human Resources (HR) responsibilities. Thereby freeing up the time of other staff members to attend to their respective portfolios and preventing the potentially uncomfortable situation of playing a role in the HR of themselves or their peers. Oversight of the range
of departments within the DSU has been split between the Director positions, with each full-time staff person directly reporting to one of the two Directors.

Historically there has been a lack of representation from marginalized communities in both full-time and part-time staff positions, despite the implementation of hiring policy and hiring equity guidelines. Significant effort was made in multiple departments throughout the 2019/20 year to increase outreach to student communities and ensure the limitation of bias during the hiring process. On top of increasing representation, it is equally important that the DSU has the resources to support a wide range of staff needs and prevent workplace exclusion or discrimination. For this reason, it has been essential that the Directors have a deep understanding of workplace equity issues and are accessible and supportive for staff in their department(s) to approach with specific concerns or needs. Comprehensive anti-oppression training was integrated into the annual part-time staff training sessions in 2017 with an overwhelmingly positive response. This type of work, however, is only the beginning.

**Workplace bullying** – As the faces of the organization, the Executive are particularly susceptible to bullying from the membership, however bullying of/between employees happens at all levels of the DSU. Trolling for example, from rude Facebook comments to flooding of voicemail and inboxes of threats, and even stalking have all been issues faced by employees of the DSU. Favouring a punitive instead of restorative and educational methods creates for a toxic workplace. Supportive developing ways to support each other that centre the needs of the victim and, where possible, focus on reconciliation is essential to all employee’s capacity to thrive.

**Sexism** – The DSU has often been referred to as a “boy’s club”, rife with misogyny. Sexist workplace characteristics are so engrained that despite the high number of female and non-binary identifying department managers/leads, and even in years with a mostly female-identifying Executive team, the DSU is seen as a misogynistic organization. In the 2015 – 2016 DSU President General Manager Report, the sexist nature of the office was named a number of times and attributed to the distribution of power namely among the senior leadership. The restructuring took the issue of distribution of power into account when creating two director positions.

**Racism** – White supremacist workplace characteristics is likely a shocking term to see associated with an organization that you are part of, yet they are present in most organizations. These are aspects of workplace culture that, unintentionally or not, not only favour White employees but actually create barriers to full inclusion for BIPOC employees. These are often things White employees lack the awareness to notice as they are simply considered ‘the standard’ way of doing things in their culture. The problem is, those standards are only the norm in cultures that favour the “White” way of doing things (hence White supremacist workplace characteristics), which means BIPOC employees and members simply cannot thrive under those conditions. A major example of this is the constant sense of urgency that is deeply rooted within the DSU. Tight non-adjustable deadlines, the notion that if you aren’t 10 minutes early for a meeting, you’re already late and preferencing speed over quality are examples of a White preferencing time management style that isn’t present in other cultures. Inflexibility in these (and other) instances upholds racial injustice and creates barriers for BIPOC members. In order to address these issues, employees must center and actively listen to the needs and experiences of BIPOC employees – this is the only way to even begin to understand the ways racism impacts the organization. As these issues are uncovered, being open and flexible to alternate ways of knowing and operating is essential to creating an environment where racism is actively addressed.
Workplace cliques – As often happens, certain employees work more closely together than others. While it is natural for stronger workplace bonds to develop among folks that work closely together or those who have worked together for longer periods of time, it becomes problematic for the organization if those work bonds are depended upon above all else. Part-time staff feel distant from the DSU and depending on which department they work for; their experience and expectations are quite different. In departments where most staff are students that transition each year, there is likely to be a sense of ‘team camaraderie’ but a sense of distance and lack of communication with the core, long-term staffers. In areas where there is a mix of short- and long-term employees (such as the 2nd floor executive and managers), there is often a lot of opportunity for communication, but a greater deal of interpersonal conflict. Finding ways to continually build bonds and connections both within and between the departments of the DSU is vital for creating a workplace where all members can thrive.

The University and Student Union setting comes with its own set of unique strengths and challenges in terms of long-term planning. Although full-time staff have the flexibility to develop their own goals and projects, changes in Government, the University, the DSU, the Executive, and the overall student population can dramatically impact the content and circumstances of work being done at the DSU.

Where we can go:

The DSU as a workplace has been substantially altered by COVID-19 and the necessary shift to online operations. Keeping staff connected and supporting is especially important and especially difficult at this time. One particular concern exists around ensuring there is cross-departmental communication and cohesion between those under the DRO and those under the DO. Strong communication between the Directors and opportunities for cross-departmental updates, discussion, and collaboration should assist in reducing feelings of distance or disconnection from the other department(s).

The workplace is not your family, nor should it be your first priority. For everyone to work in a comfortable space, it is essential that all staff are operating off of the same baseline of mutual respect, professionalism, and team support. We know that staff have built long-lasting and deep relationships with one another and hope that staff will continue to have ample (and increased) opportunities to bond whether through fun socialization events/activities and/or shared passion for the work they do in supporting students. However, it is imperative that these relationships do not become a cause of workplace stress, rather than preventing or alleviating it. The narrative of the workplace as a “family” often comes attached to leveraging these relationships with expectations of time and energy far above what is reasonable to expect of staff. They are workers, but first and foremost they are individuals with lives and priorities that exist outside of this space and it is important that this is acknowledged and respected.

It is essential that, as our staff contribute so substantially to the DSU, they should be provided opportunities to access training and professional development that enrich their work at the DSU and beyond. The health and wellbeing of staff should be the top priority in building and maintaining a strong workplace culture. Providing our part-time and full-time staff with training and professional development opportunities that would translate to a better workplace and service provision is essential. The fast-paced environment of a student union can exacerbate stress related to work. It is always important to consider power dynamics and perspectives when selecting facilitators – remember that
facilitators are an amazing way to engage employees in active listening, choosing facilitators that deeply understand and have lived experience with the topics you’re addressing is vital to creating a meaningful educational environment.

**Space as a Resource**

*Where we are:*

The DSU is fortunate to have the Student Union Building as a hub for our members on campus. With a wide array of spaces and the ability to setup rooms to meet our client’s needs, we generate a lot of revenue from external room bookings. Student societies have access to booking rooms in the SUB for free as well as a once a year McInnes room rental. Office space for societies has seen an increase in interest over the years. The fourth-floor houses Dalhousie services like the Bissett and Multi-faith Centre among others. Also located on the fourth floor are the DAGS Offices, and CKDU. The third floor consists of the Society Hub which includes the Society Offices, the Gazette office, a Boardroom, kitchenette and lockers, the DSU Community Closet and Study Space. DSU services on this floor include Campus Copy, the Productions office, the DSUSO office, the DSAS office, the E&A office, Survivor Support Centre and full-time staff offices. Rooms for rent on this floor are Room 301, 302, and 303. The second floor includes the Exec Offices, Staff Offices, Member Services Desk, Commissioner/Comms staff desks, Accounting corner, McInnis room, Council Chambers, bookable rooms, storage space/custodial storage, food services room, 2nd floor kitchenette/storage, and Boardrooms. On the main floor we have the Front Desk, Study Area, Market Set-up area, Green Wall (across from market setup area), Food Services, Atrium, Grawood, Market Storage. And finally, in the basement we have the Food Services Hallway, Dal Bookstore and Book return area, Ascensions Cuts, the Foodbank, NSPIRG, Wellness Room, Wellness Room Office, DSU Storage Room.

*Where we can go:*

There is a lot of room for better utilization of space in the SUB. Thinking about the spaces we control as a resource and aligning our actions with an anti-oppressive framework, there is so much potential for what the SUB can become.

Art is a representation and dream for what the world can be. The DSU has a lot of prime blank spaces that can be turned into beautiful and meaningful art pieces. With a focus on the strategic priority of centering the margins, we can envision a DSU decorated from head to toe by the art of Black, Indigenous, Queer, Different abled folks, People of Colour and more bring to light their visions for an equitable future. Also thinking about using these blank spaces as a way to educate our members of the realities of those margins, we can install permanent and non-permanent multi-media art pieces highlighting and bringing to light those on the margins. Examples of projects that were in the works includes an installation of red dresses to symbolize and highlight Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada. Stairwells of the SUB have had racist graffiti and it is a maintenance cost to constantly repaint these and other spaces after students have vandalized them. Created permanent art fixtures on these spaces celebrating the margins would not just bring some colour into the SUB but also fulfill our mandate of educating our membership and act as a political statement of claiming space for those who have often been left out. The DSU graphic designer & campaigns coordinator position could
coordinate the creation of these pieces working with the DSU executive and community council representatives. Other spaces that have been underutilized include the DSU’s green wall, the Wall of Nostalgia, bulletin boards within the SUB and any/all blank white walls. Often times, we celebrate Black folks during Black history month, the Queer community during pride, the Indigenous community on Mi’kmaq history month. Yet, these folks don’t stop existing outside of these designated times and art pieces that are permanent can be one way we combat this. Murals painting in the Mulgrave community is just one example of how art can bring communities together. Utilizing Dalhousie and the greater K’jipuktuk community to envision and create the art is a way to also fulfill the strategic priority building collaborative community. Using these spaces as a place to educate through art has huge potential.

Opening the Grawood for a once a year booking for societies similar to the McInnes room can help bring in more societies. Furthermore, allowing two or more societies to book the McInnes room for an unlimited amount of free bookings can facilitate the priority of creating a collaborative community. Solidarity bookings is another great way to create a collaborative community. Allowing organizations that have a mandate of centering the margins have a free booking once a year, demonstrates our commitment to the greater K’jipuktuk social justice scene.

Prayer space on campus has been an issue. During the renovations of the SUB, the Wellness room was meant to fit that need. However, it is clear that no Muslims were consulted in the decisions because the room orientation does not properly face the qibla (direction in which Muslims pray). We recommend that Room 226 in the SUB be turned into a Prayer space and Zen space. The space is currently used as storage and all the items in this room can find another home in the SUB. Placing the DSU’s prayer and Zen space in a prominent area with large windows demonstrates our organizational commitment to Muslim students. Nap spaces on campus have been an ask of students for a while now and this space also being used for this purpose during exam and midterm season would make sense. The atrium at the LeMarchant area would be another ideal space for nap sessions. We recommend having a single entrance to the nap area as well as an Event Staff supervising the space at all times.

The Wellness room is another underutilized space in the SUB. With the prayer and Zen space moved to room 226, the wellness room can be revitalized. In 2015/2016, the university ran an of-campus student lounge out of the fourth floor of the SUB. Although a great idea, the location was not ideal, so they turned it into office space. The space had couches, snacks, tables, video games, board games and more. I think a chill space like that would work well within the wellness room. The little alcove at the far back can be used to store books, board games, yoga mats and more and the space can be booked out by societies for smaller events. The lockers and shelves outside the wellness room are also underutilized and can be made to store resources. Another option for this space is to turn it into a social justice Hub and house various societies aligned with an anti-oppressive framework to share it.
Part 4: Consultation & Member Feedback

Consultation Session: Members

Presidential Committee Consultation

What programming, services or supports would you like to see at the DSU?

- Puppy room
- Spaces on campus for member under 19+ for fun
- More fruit options → mango
- Destressing activities → bouncy castle/puppy room!!!!!
- Allow average member to have a voice
- Accountability
- Community care events

What issues do you face as a Dalhousie member?

- Tuition – increasing rate every year
- Disproportionate impact of fees rising on marginalized community
- Textbook fees
- Their own words don’t make sense → Dal strategic plan values and budget don’t align
- Hard to find affordable housing near campus
- No elevators in Howe – not acceptable
- Excessive drinking and the smell of weed in res
- Res false fire alarms are annoying
- members need to pay extra for winter break/fixed rate for summer
- LSC building – there is asbestos in the walls of the LSC
- Issue with the prof not teaching well. Would like to see an improvement to the situation while still in the class. As of right now, classes feedback only gets incorporated afterwards
- TopHat is unnecessary and expensive
- Same class held with different prof – learning experience for member differs
- Profs not returning the course material at a timely manner
- Members are overworked
How could the DSU address these issues?

- Centralized review/complaint system. Place a complaint box in every department – reviewed every week
- Elimination of Tuition fees
- Getting rid of differential fees
- Support members build up a network. Host LinkedIn IRL event/initiatives to connect members with potential networks
- Career support/COOP support at the Faculty-level support
- Create member outreach initiatives → connect with RAs
- Instagram and Snapchat member engagement
- DSU app
- Support international members with their immigration
- Create a sense of community
- Support societies more
- Addressing broad issues that will take into account our other priorities

How can we address food insecurity on campus?

- Create a campaign to tackle issues including stigma around being insecure
- Promote volunteer opportunity with the Foodbank
- Volunteer appreciation events

How can we tackle mental health and wellness on campus?

- Help members understand how to navigate the mental health system at Dal. HRES Purple Folder is a good example
- Increase services
- Member are having bad experiences with the current system
- If you aren’t at the point of hurting yourself, they send you away
- Not seen as valid enough to get help. They tell you to come back if it gets worse
- “I hate Dal mental health”
- Structural and cultural competency for BIPOOC folks
- Onus on BIPOC members to filter support through a competent lens
- Sexton Mental Health → Sexton Chapter Jack.org society report
• Members are unaware of the change in services
• Sharing knowledge of resources for members → compile resource lists

**Senate Student Caucus Consultation**

*What were your advocacy priorities this year?*

• Political viewpoint brought into senate by student senators
• Focus on equity & diversity
• Dalhousie's New Deal → Senate policies introduced by caucus
• Feedback avenue for member senators → create avenues for members to engage

*In your opinion, what does our education our priority look like?*

• Diversified curriculum
• Financial support → Members are concerned about how they will pay for school
• Remote learning → Who access to quiet space? Access to the necessary technology?
• Support and clear access to research opportunities
• Information about supervisor responsibilities and the accountability measures available
  • Lack of accountability for tenure profs
• Creating better academic accommodations and addressing access barriers
  • Accommodation for member senators → Academic leniency
• Religious accommodations
  • Sexton/Carleton prayer room
  • Religious accommodation policy
  • Don’t schedule classes and exams during religious days/times
• Invisible disability accommodation
  • Accessibility centre → proactive approach
  • Member-centric approach
  • Information to members
  • Informed and equity profs
• Grad members
  • Unique circumstances → family, mental health, professional obligations, etc.
- Member-centric policies and accommodations processes.
- Discipline specific supports ➔ Plagiarism and academic success, etc.
- SRIs need to be redone
- Race-based data needs to be collected
- mechanism to compensate members negatively affected by a bad prof.
  - Partial refund?
  - Tuition waved on retake of class?
  - Note on transcript?

**What are the current gaps within Dalhousie’s mental health services?**
- Lack of adequate mental health accommodations
- Shorter wait times to see a counsellor and/or physiatrist
- Clearer process and access methods
- Empathy gap within professors ➔ some profs don’t understand mental health
- Safer relationships between profs and members ➔ upstream approach

**In your opinion, what does centering the margins look like?**
- Equity & Social Justice
- International member support
  - Plagiarism ➔ online module
  - Awareness of the consequences and processes around plagiarism
  - Supports made clear
  - Resources on BrightSpace
- Create sense of community ➔ use communications methods that Uni uses
- Mentorship program for members
- Decolonizing classrooms
  - Train professors ➔ faculty awareness
  - Acknowledge and validate different types of knowledge and knowing
  - Faculty specific approach ➔ Diverse case studies employed in class
  - Value and incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing
  - Bring in guest speakers ➔ share the mic when you cannot speak to the issue
- Diverse curricula across all departments and disciplines
- Diverse and non-Eurocentric readings in all classes
- Faculty Specific Work
- Equity audit across faculties
- Hire diverse profs
- Deans create faculty buy-in
- Faculty EDI Advisor
- Support faculties to achieve their goals of EDI
- Mandate a yearly report on what they’ve been doing for the year
- Identify and tackle faculty specific access barriers
- Diverse Academic representation in Faculty, staff and admin
- Institutional cultural competency
- Prioritize holistic member experience

*What do your faculty specific experiences look like?*

- Faculty of Health
  - Highlights the social determinates of health
  - Does not mandate students to take an Indigenous health course ➞ it should
- Faculty of Management
  - Faculty teaching on international issues is stereotypical and inaccurate
  - Faculty and member level international member support are available
- Psychology Department
  - Profs are trying to incorporate EDI into their classrooms
  - Science advisors don’t have accurate understanding of degree requirements
- Faculty of Engineering
  - Very supportive peer mentorship program available
  - Academic advising isn’t supportive ➞ advisors are giving inaccurate info
- Faculty of Computer Science
  - Student-centric faculty ➞ faculty listens to and cares about student feedback
  - Culture of sexism
Faculty of Science

- Some profs incorporating diverse perspective
- Some profs use decade old slides and don’t care about contemporary info

2019/20 Executive Team Consultation

How can we engage and educate the DSU membership on the DSU and what we do?

- Anti-O Training
  - Create Incentives for societies to come
  - Help E&A/Member Services Department structure workshops
  - Utilize popular events like O-Week, PT staff, DalFest, Society Expo, etc.
  - Intensive recurring anti-o for full and part-time staff.
  - Create Dalhousie specific teaching material (ex. O-Week Anti-o slideshow/quiz)

- Member engagement
  - Recreation of the DSU app.
  - Fixing the mobile website → formatting issues
  - Create We are the DSU Series “Class talk” video
  - Tabling with street squad.
  - Attending society meetings and events
  - News report-esque livestreams or CKDU shows

How can we center the margins within the DSU?

- Prioritize Green Spaces & Sustainability
  - Tasking people with research and creating proposals for potential green spaces
  - Look into options for green space and expanding Urban Garden to Sexton
  - Reusable container/kitchen program
  - People can donate and they could be available in the SUB lobby and Sexton Alumni lounge?
  - Look into Chartwells discounts → rinse a mezza container or use a travel mug

- E&A Office Support
  - Help them with their restructuring proposal
**How can we improve our current services and student supports?**

- **DSU Bar Services (Grawood/T-Room)**
  - Culturally competent and diverse planning
  - More dry events
  - Events before 9pm for under 19 members
  - Prioritize affordability in food and beverages
  - Prioritize Consent culture
  - Deals within on Grawood food to incentivize over other options

- **Council & Policies**
  - Develop Indigenous students Issues Policy
  - Develop Sustainability Issues Policy
  - Develop 2SLGBTQ+ student issues Policy
  - Develop Black students’ issues policy

- **International Students Support**
  - Communications strategy/campaign based around Student Affairs stats

**How can we create collaborative community?**

- **Sexton Campus Services**
  - Converging the DSU and Health Plan office
  - Accessible and regular office hours
  - Review Dal accessibility audit
  - Winter society fair
  - More microwaves
  - Integrate Sexton Advisory Committee into bylaws
  - Support the Sextant
  - Society storage areas
  - Keys to bulletin boards
  - More reps from Sexton on Council
  - More food available in the T-Room
Consultation Session: Sexton Members

How would you describe the DSU to a first-year member?

- Quick, easy and simple
- Band-aid solution to the member experience
- An institution
- Work on supporting members where the university is not involved

How can we work towards our education as our priority?

- Members are overworked
- Have Choose between studying and projects
- Members do large scale projects and take courses
- Eng. is designed is to take 6 courses a semester
- Profs taking the course of rails → only completed half of the course material required
- Tenure profs don’t care
- Elimination of Tuition fees
- Engineering is really expensive with having to take 6 courses per semester
- Differential fees for international members
- Dean of Engineering decides what projects get funding
- Idea Hub → tech start-ups → pitch ideas → physical deliverable → commercialize it
- Eng. Curriculum → prioritize sustainability

How can we center the margins on campus?

- Equity organizing → WIE society is a space where woman can be themselves
- Limited female bathrooms
- Male bathrooms have never been a problem
- Consider who we celebrate by putting on our walls and being represented → white men
- Dalhousie is the cheapest from Canadian tuition for international members
- BIPOC members’ ideas are not being heard/listened to in projects
- Black member representation & HUB → Imhotep centre
- Problems with professor → some profs are sexist
- Some projects are sponsored by industry → Ex. Car projects sponsored by Shell
- Dalhousie renewal energy society
- Move towards renewable energy projects → electric cars

**How can the Relationship Between the DSU & Sexton Campus Improve?**

- Make use of DSU office space
- Sexton MSA’s and Coordinator relationship
- Promotion of services available on campus
- DUES/DSU relationship
- Advisory Committee
- Winter society fair

**Consultation Session: Sexton Advisory Committee**

**What programming, services or supports would you like to see at the DSU?**

- Orientation for members coming to Sexton from Studley after the first two years
- Orientation for International and Transfer students → Sexton has a lot
- Want staircase with projector and screen to be bookable for member societies
- Society guide presentation so members understand what services the DSU provides
- Society Fair on Sexton campus
- Sexton Coordinator role integrated into policy
  - Mandate clear responsibilities and accountability measures
  - Increase of Sexton Coordinator budget

**What issues do you face as a Dalhousie member?**

- Classroom Space → Inadequate furniture and space for classroom sizes
- No International Student Centre on Sexton Campus
- Healthcare → Few on-campus facilities or supports
- Lack of accessible mental healthcare on Sexton
- Lack of practical study space → Due to donor influence over campus
- Societies
  - Lack of access to storage space
  - Lack of society office space
- Uncertainty about benefits from ratification → feel a lack of support from DSU
- Bulletin boards are not updated
- Get society primary financial support from external organizations
- Meeting rooms primarily available to outside corporations rather than members

**Accessibility**
- Lack of physical accessibility on-campus.
- Lack of women’s and gender-neutral bathrooms.

**Lack of University Support**
- Increased tuition but lowered Faculty funding.
- Fewer TA’s → led to members considering dropping courses or dropping out
- Writing Centre isn’t around in the summer
- Faculty leaving and no replacements
- Inexperienced faculty
- Faculty brought in from external organizations with priority obligations

**T-Room** → No open hours during the day as study/general member space

**Lack of food available on campus**

**Lack of Admin Representation** → No sexton-specific rep. higher than Dean level

**Inter-Campus Conflict**
- Tension between Engineering and Architecture/Planning
- A/P have their own space, access to better meeting rooms, and key access
- Significant separation between discipline

*How could the DSU address these issues?*
- Promotion of complaint process to students
- Advocacy through Classroom Planning Committee → classroom inadequacies
- Awareness-raising about supports available on Sexton (through Dal, societies, etc.)
- Advocacy to University for Health & Wellness services on Sexton
- Admin is more accommodating for older areas of campus to have changes → study area
- Short-term ask → TV Dinner trays to enable practical use of furniture
- Cushions for large stair areas that are intended to be seating.
Lack of separation between quiet study space and communal hangout space.

Give societies access to DSU storage space.
  - Long-term solution → integration of lockers into DSU storage space.

Sexton Coordinator organizing office hours for Sexton societies in other DSU office

Advocate to relevant faculty/admin for access to staircase with projector

Get extra keys for bulletin boards for Sexton Coordinator or DUES to manage

Clarify process for getting posters into DSU bulletin boards

Review of accessibility audit from Dalhousie to determine advocacy points for DSU

Support student initiatives
  - Marketing support for Dal-Denim via Dal Bookstore

How can the DSU tackle food insecurity on Sexton?

More support to widen range offered by DSUSO Breakfast Club on Sexton.

DSU Snack Shack → Foodbank on Sexton campus

DSU Market on Sexton

Advocate for longer hours for on-campus cafe

Enable access to kitchenette space

Microwaves near study areas

Consultation Session: Societies

How can we address food insecurity on campus?

Every member on every campus has access to affordable and healthy food options

Reflective of cultural and dietary requirements

Define food insecurity

Foodbank → Catch folks falling through the cracks

Universal human right

Celebrate the volunteers

DSU Market → Affordable sustainable food option supporting local

Loaded Ladle, Urban Garden and other societies collaboration

DSUSO and E&A → conduct research and run campaigns
- Research topic: What prevents folks from using the DSU Market?
- Research topic: Trends of foodbank usage

*How can we center the margins on campus?*

- Addressing inequities
- Having the hard conversations → not shying away or whitewashing
- Look at which research is prioritized
- Importance of race-based data
- Idea of reality are not centered in people’s actual experiences
- Research acts as a starting point to the conversation
- Without the data → issues can be dismissed and ignored
- Broaden the understanding of what accessibility looks like → Intersectional
- Beyond just disability → accessible accessibility
- What barriers are in place systemically that prevent people’s inclusion
  - Intersectional lens
  - Systemic, physical, structural (institutional)
  - Accessibility of language (socially constructed)
- Time and compassion → listen and understand experiences of people
- Making change takes times. truly understanding people takes time
- Get out of capitalist lens into a compassionate lens

*How can we create collaborative community on campus?*

- NSPIRG: A Just University Community Connector working group
  - Faculty, Staff, Administration on side
  - Knowing what groups have and can offer
  - Collab on resources, information & capacity
- Societies collaborations
- Local. global community → Greater Kjipuktuk, Mi’qmaq, Turtle Island and the world
- Sense of community among members
- DSU Internal Social Justice Team → space for the structure to live within the DSU
- DSUSO & E&A Office need to be better connected to the DSU
- Cannot rely on these offices as they change year by year with the priorities of members via the Director
- As a levy office they are able to do their own thing
- Function similar to societies
- Can come together on projects and initiatives
- Come together as equal shareholders
- but should NOT BE STRUCTURALLY CONNECTED

How can we tackle mental health and wellness on campus?

- What are the avenues currently available to members?
- Research: What is missing and who is falling through the cracks?
- Compare what is happening at Dalhousie vs. other schools across Canada and the world
- Structurally competent for 2SLGBTQ+ and BIPOC members
- More professionals with the training
- Health plan options to get services elsewhere
- Streams of Support
  - Emergency
  - Critical
  - Moderate Intervention Styles → Conflict resolution
  - Early intervention
- DSU should connect directly with service providers
- What does Dal’s Health and Wellness Centre need on their end to make services better for members? → We as members advocate on that

Consultation Session: Research & Outreach and Operations Departments

Member Services Department Consultation

How can your department work towards creating collaborative community?

- Creating a sense of community → Societies
- Building up Member leaders
- Workshop Suite
- Anti-o mandatory for societies to ratify but DSU has no structure for it
- Survivor support training → HRES might be making one
- Treasurer training
- PEO training
- Accessible event training (Current VPAE previously made a useful resource doc.)

**What does your department require to fulfil the strategic priorities?**

- Training Opportunities
  - Member Services department is very overreaching and would benefit from training
    - Team Management, Conflict resolution, Mental health response and other interpersonal skills training
  - FT staff weekly meeting trainings → idea brought forward by previous DO & DRO
  - Training to be able to train part-time staff within department
  - Resource list for trainings staff can take
  - Part-time staff trainings throughout the year
  - Bring in an external facilitator
  - Part-time staff need to understand the DSU governance structure
  - What decision making bodies can decide what
  - Treasurer training was not adequately and sufficient provided

**How can your department tackle food insecurity? How can it be improved?**

- Oversee foodbank and market
- Food security needs its own portfolio
- Part-time Foodbank coordinator → 15h/w minimum
- DSU Market requires better internal structure and distribution of workload
- The market should not run at a deficit → it should break even at least
- Better funding structure for market → business collaboration, sponsorship, sustainable and ethical merch
- Ideally, full-time staff to run oversee market along with Food Bank
- divide the market labour on the ground between part-time staff
- Several part-time staff to cover the different market fields
- Ex. operations, orders, food box, accounting, communications, outreach

- DSU market vs. grocery stores → Connect with community (Pres’s mom loved food box)

- Market is a mini business → how do we utilize members at Dal to gain the experience and be experts in varying fields
  - Co-op member
  - Course credit
  - Partner with faculty of management
  - Members need volunteer hours

**Director Research & Outreach Director Consultation**

- As described in the council orientation guide and Exec. policy
- Can’t be too prescriptive → Core areas and values
- Prioritizing united member movement
- Major organizational assessment
- Annual anti-oppression audit
- Systemic racism (racism on campus, racism in the workplace, hiring practices)
- Disability justice (building accessibility, advocacy services, inclusive events, hiring practices, workplace culture)
- How is the DSU operating on stolen land, how are we supporting Indigenous members, staff and faculty?
- How is the DSU supporting reparations while existing within an institution build on slavery?

**Research & Outreach Departments Consultation**

*How can we address food insecurity on campus?*

- DSU Foodbank
  - Pay staff what they deserve (budgeted for)
  - Operations budget for the foodbank
  - Financially independent
  - Able to stock shelves (buy specific products members want)
  - Long-term sustainability of the foodbank
- Separate bank account
- Potential internal autonomy as the offices do
- Donor relationship → program
- Volunteers → Street Squad
- Courses that take on volunteer hours
- Charitable mandate societies
- Social Justice Team Campaigns Team
  - Food Security Campaign
  - Street squad outreach
  - Increase awareness and comfort about accessing food services
  - Destigmatize accesses different food supports
  - Research
  - Data collected from foodbank
  - E&A office collab.
  - Lobbying work and research
  - Food issues policy.
  - DSUSO report served to council → suggests adjustments to structures
- DSU Market
  - Sustainable Funding structure
  - Broader access to local produce
  - Adequate storage space
  - Staff structure (full-time staff)
  - Loaded Ladle → Free food Tuesday to Friday

*How can the DSU support and service Sexton campus?*
- Sexton members take a lead and let the DSU know what they need
- Address feelings of disconnect
- Empower members with resources and knowledge of what services they have access to
  - Awareness of the services we provide
  - Awareness of what the DSU is and what they do
Communication on the services → how to access them

Male dominated discipline → how can survivor support centre serve sexton campus?

Who does what at Dalhousie → DSU vs. Dalhousie vs. Gov. distinctions

Sexton Advisory Committee

- Establish relationship
- Structure that exists
- Clearly establish what the space is, who is there and what it does
- Provide DSU services without folks know what the DSU is

Role of the Sexton Coordinator

Sexton Member Services Assistants

Challenges → Location of the offices

Revitalize use of Buzzboards on Sexton campus → currently rusted

How can your departments function better within the DSU structure?

- Directors should be in close communication and sharing info between departments
- Directors proactive in communications with Exec. & Staff
- Departments avoid the working in silos
- Having clear structures around how we use different platforms for communications
- Established structures of communications
- Weekly one-on-one meetings with Director
- Entire staff meetings at some point

How are your departments incorporating the five strategic priorities?

- Graphic Design & Campaigns Coordinator
- Creating mandate for the office → guiding docs. for the year being developed
- Supporting graphic design needs of DSU
- Supporting campaigns
- Supporting Societies with graphics depends on when/if there is space
- Communicating Fulltime staff, exec. and directors
- Creating documents to support institutional knowledge
- Centering the Margins → looking forward to working on murals & artwork
▪ Policy & Governance Coordinator
  ▪ Create resources for members to be available on the website
  ▪ Support member navigate different policies options available
  ▪ Support members directly interact with the governance structure
  ▪ Creation of longer-term documentation for priorities
  ▪ Identify collaboration opportunities
  ▪ Supporting offices & research initiatives of the DSU

▪ Communications Coordinator
  ▪ Supporting departments in the work that they are doing
  ▪ Social media campaigns → Service awareness & member priorities
  ▪ Website → information available to members
  ▪ Dal Gazette DSU and Sextant → Put out media releases and get Ad space
  ▪ Dalhousie Comms team relationship building
  ▪ We are the DSU Newsletter → Once a month

▪ Member Services Department
  ▪ Mental health → Stress Relief Exam Season Series (message days & yoga)
  ▪ Community building → facilitating intercommunication between societies
  ▪ Community building → incentives for societies to collab with VPSL funding
  ▪ Class talks
  ▪ Society Expo on Sexton and study campus
  ▪ Centering the margins → Planning accessible events workshop

▪ Survivor Support Centre
  ▪ Detailed mandate & workplan developed
  ▪ Focus on Mental health and Centering the margins priorities

*Diving Deeper into Tackling Food Insecurity on Campus Foodbank Coordinator Consultation*

*Discourse around the role of foodbanks*
  ▪ Food bank → Step away from the language of band-aid solution
  ▪ Band-aids issues tend to be ignored when not needed
- Provide standard measures for free access to food
- Tuition/textbook/cost of living always going up
  - At the end of the day, there is no money left for food
- Reimagine what affordable food looks like
- Foodbank needs to be part of a plan for longevity around accessible food
- Access to produce is a barrier
- Can we get to the place where we no longer need foodbanks?
- Unless the ENTIRE SYSTEM (economy driven for profit) is overhauled then no
- Been treated as a place where people go at the lower end of society
- As the economy gets worse, more people are using the foodbank
- Foodbank → Sustainable way of feeding members and the greater community
- Focus on longevity, substantial & sustainable service for members in the long run
- Stigma around foodbank exists and is a barrier to access
- No matter what the situation that occurs – we want foodbank users feed

About the DSU Foodbank & structure

- Foodbank was around in the DSU for 20 years and seen as a PROJECT
- Foodbank needs its own defined budget
- Donations to the foodbank need to go JUST to the Foodbank
- Needs a policy and procedure
- Needs to be seen as a FUNDAMENTAL service within the DSU
- Requires a standard and stabilization within the DSU
- Needs to be its own entity → Defined foodbank structure
- Food bank structure is completely dependent on the people running it
  - Currently Member Services Coordinator and Food Bank Coordinator
  - From the outside, it looks like the Foodbank is running fine
  - In reality → FB Coordinator is puts in 30+ hours than they are paid
  - Without a structure in place → loss of institutional knowledge if they leave
- 4 years ago → DSU budgeted for a food manager that was merged into DSUSO
  - Would coordinate the Loaded Ladle, Market and Foodbank
Food security is 50% of the Member Services department’s work

Foodbank falls under:

- Feed Nova Scotia policies
- Food Bank Canada policies
- Health & safety policies
- Privacy policies

What can the DSU do to tackle food insecurity moving forward?

- Two Member Services Department Full-time Staff
  - Society Coordinator
  - Food Security Coordinator
- Food Security Coordinator
  - Oversee operations of Market
  - Oversee operations of Foodbank
  - Connect with local farms, sponsors and partnerships for Foodbank and Market
  - Relationship with SUB Food services → Contract with Chartwells
- Work towards a long-term plan that is structured and supported that allows members to have access to foods regardless for their monetary situation
- Research
  - Look at what’s been done
  - Fill in the gaps → What has been focused on? What has been missed?
  - Demographics of who uses the foodbank
  - Potential NSPIRG or E&A collaboration
- Campaign to Address Food Insecurity Stigma
  - Trick or Eat campaign looked into by VPSL and Member Services Coordinator
  - Reality check around why members use the foodbank and
  - Members thoughts/feels/vibes on food insecurity
- DSU has created the space to talk about financial issues via tuition advocacy
  - Real Talk campaign → People realize they are not alone
  - Positive conversation around what the DSU is doing to tackle food insecurity
• while also taking the issues of food insecurity SERIOUSLY
• Utilizing space as a resource  →  conversation with Facilities Manager
  • Market storage space (look at how we are utilizing DSU physical space)
  • Foodbank storage could replace DSU storage room
• Foodbank, Market and Loaded Ladle
  • All three come at food security at a different direction
  • Each one benefits the member body
  • Each are their own independent entity
  • Individual policies should be developed for them separately

Operations Department Consultation

How are your departments incorporating the five strategic priorities?

• Facilities Department
  • Execution  →  How does the rubber hit the road
  • Bring in the experience
  • support what those initiatives look like
• Meetings & Events Department
  • Food Insecurity
  • Food services at events  →  not enough money to pay for full catering
  • Supportive of members that work within the department
• Campus Copy Department
  • Discounted and donated printing
  • Sometime staff are hungry and we feed them
  • Connected with staff to chat with them and provide support
  • Hiring policy (diversity)
  • Working hard from a hiring perspective
  • Campus copy creates a community

How are your departments functioning well?

• Understanding the importance of policy
• New hiring policy: where it came from and why it’s important
  • policies reflect what are values are → policies are key
  • policy is a guideline and path for operations team

• Communication between all departments when things change
  • Keep operations team in the loop on governance changes
  • Communication → Regular team meetings
  • You make the policy and we’ll follow through on them
  • Keeping informed at every step of the process
  • What was in the old policy vs. the new policy that will affect our job
  • building trust
  • let folks have input → Structures, processes and guidelines

• Part-Time Staff Training Day
  • give everyone the same common msg
  • Department heads can reverberate it throughout the year
  • Training day sets the tone → morning sessions give DSU mandate

• Supports
  • HR support → Director of Operations
  • Institutional knowledge — Facilities Manager
  • Stay connected and make sure we are improving ourselves and services

How can your departments function better within the DSU structure?

• Year-round training program
  • able to reiterate plethora of services provided by the DSU
  • Develop full understanding of what the DSU is and what we are about
  • What people to believe in the organization we have
  • Department heads know what everything looks like
  • How the pieces of the DSU fit together
  • Otherwise have a pretty efficient workspace

• Marketing and advertising
  • Reach a wider audience - collaborative community
- Offer services to a wider range of groups
- Comms and promotions plans for printing services

- **Services Improvement**
  - DSU Relationship between events department and DMCRT
  - Mental health debrief space option for booking
  - Develop DSU Food policy
  - Campus copy Wide format printing → need space

- **Keeping team informed**
  - Executive Initiatives communicated to staff
  - Communicate with PT staff who tell their friends who tell their friends
  - CC Stay in tune with team → disseminate information to the team (gossip hub)
  - Regular comms meetings

- **Accounting**
  - Policies and procedures are huge
  - improving procedures put into place
  - Teaching the incoming Exec. on how to follow the procedure
  - Procedures need to work for the department and others too
  - Training and guidance for non-staff utilizing DSU accounting services

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**Council Consultation**

*What are concerns of your constituents?*

- Altering name and pronouns in the university system
  - Dalhousie’s policy currently only allows people to change their first name
  - at other schools this has been altered through senate
  - system the university uses makes these kinds of changes difficult
  - working on shifting their internal system this process may become easier after
  - broader category of Member Advocacy.
- Dealing with homophobia in residence and getting support
• International Student Supports
  • Information-sharing during recruitment of International students
  • Determining what kind of institutions support members to travel to other countries to work.
  • Ensuring members have information necessary to avoid difficulties with paying tuition or facing delays in visa processing.

• Accommodations from Faculty
  ▪ Graduate members have unique needs in terms of family care, mental health, and professional obligations.
  ▪ Need for member-centric policies and accommodations processes.

• Equity & Centering the Margins
  ▪ a lot of flaws in certain programs EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) policy
  ▪ Islamophobia from faculty - need for cultural competency and anti-oppression training particularly present issue on Sexton.
  ▪ Food security and food options in residence. Particularly few vegan or vegetarian options.

• Academic supports
  ▪ members don’t know how to file complaints about professors.
  ▪ flawed the SRI system
  ▪ the SRI has little impact on status whether tenured or not
  ▪ that SRI’s do not address anything during that time-period.
  ▪ Some members drop out due to absent supervisors
  ▪ switching between departments can be difficult.

Accessing adequate Health & Wellness supports on campus
  ▪ no Black counsellors or doctors on-campus, which has led some members to avoid counselling altogether.
  ▪ DSU insurance does not include counselling.

What can the DSU do to address these issues
  ▪ Teach-in, workshops, info sharing campaigns
    ▪ Student academic rights
    ▪ How to File complaint about professor
- Senate as a good avenue to address academic issues
- Ombudsperson should be an avenue for advocacy around this.
- Academic supports
  - How to get into honors and graduate programs. Process is unclear, requires meeting with multiple people, and how easy it is is dependent on the knowledge of who you approach.
- Need higher member engagement around the elections and governance.
  - Ensure members get something back for voting, and end voter indifference.
  - Awareness of services available for members - particularly mental health and physical activity
- Feedback and lived experience collection
  - creating a way for members to provide feedback on mental health services at Dalhousie.
  - sending written accounts of experiences to Mental Health Caucus and use this as an avenue to create a feedback structure.

What are the main areas of advocacy concerning your constituents?

- Tuition Fees - disproportionately targeting International Members.
- Funding + Programming for the International Centre.
  - Noted improvements on this from Dalhousie this year, especially with the Member Work Experience Program.
- Dining Halls - not a lot of diversity or variety.
- Residence programming and support.
- Housing insecurity and homelessness.
- Funding for member societies.
- Mental Health
- Cultural Competency
- Lines of communication between DSU and faculty societies - trying to channel through Council rep.
- Mental Health
- Tuition Costs
- Faculty
  - people leave and aren’t replaced
- Professors being sexist, racist, generally discriminatory
- Inexperienced faculty
- Lack of faculty that aren’t brought in from external organizations - their first priority is not teaching.
- Issues with criteria in faculty recruitment.
- Evening classes
- Lobbying Administration on TRC + MMIWG recommendations.
- Childcare
  - Changing Stations
  - Breastfeeding Spaces
- Transphobia (pronouns especially)
- Policy + procedural defense against discrimination.
- Community-building and networking.
- Anti-Black Racism - especially in Law and Social Work, both peer to peer and from faculty.
- Situational support, how to address racism in the classroom.
- Racism from staff, both at DSU and Dalhousie.
- Information on research opportunities.
- Prayer space on campus.
- Incorporating our strategic plan information into Dalhousie’s

**Delving Deeper into Strategic Priorities: Our Education - Our Priority**

*What are some ideal supports and guidelines that would be beneficial to students?*

- Library Hours at AG Campus
  - Regular hours are 11am-5pm on Saturdays and 12pm-5pm on Sundays.
  - Hard to access study spaces outside of working hours
  - Top floor of student learning commons – study space set aside for health professions lounge.
- TA Support
  - Hiring faculty → Long-term sustainability
  - Offering competitive environments
  - Administration familiarity and accessibility
Knowing who to go to with issues and how to contact these people i.e. what can you go to each person for? Flowcharts will help.

- **Scheduling**
  - Conflict between course requirements (timing, alternate requirements) where some courses are only offered in one semester (mostly AG campus)
  - Distance between classrooms – keeping similar ones in same buildings/ areas

*What does Accessibility and Equity look like on campus?*

- **Campus Life**
  - Multilingual front desk staff
  - SUB front desk – alert button
  - Naloxone training for DSU staff
  - Accessible buildings and outdoor spaces
  - Auditing information made public
  - More elevators
  - Dal security impartiality

- **Faculty and classroom instruction**
  - More funding for accessible classrooms
  - Regular syllabus reviews to ensure curriculum stays relevant
  - SRIs vs. tenured professor’s authority – how to address issues like racism?

*What actions can be taken to improve these issues?*

- Get rid of hidden fees e.g. TopHat
- More university communication
- More trust in student societies
- More connection between DSU, senate and faculty level committees
- SRIs being taken seriously for tenure review and for improvement by tenured professors
- Greater variation on courses by different professors (avoid too much overlapping material in the same department)
- Classroom updates e.g. comfier chairs
- Balancing comfort with expenses from students. I.e. being fiscally responsible to avoid increasing tuition fees every year by essentially balancing the university budget on the backs of students
- Make first year classes available online.
- Better support for student issues with professors.
- Mandatory anti-oppressive training for faculty.
- Creating an external board to review educational content
- Less restriction on interdisciplinary courses

**Delving Deeper into Student Health & Wellness**

- **Statement of Intent**
  - The DSU is committed to the implementation of preventive measures for mental health.
  - DSU will advocate to promote the mental health of its constituents with a focus on those with most need.
  - The DSU to promote awareness of the diversity of mental health in a holistic framework.

- **General Goals**
  - Promote awareness
  - Research demographics
  - Changing the narrative of what the student experience is
  - Promoting collective idea of success
  - Promoting alternative ideas of success for students
  - Responding during crisis – short and long term
  - Community peer support
  - Culturally relevant services
  - Highlight classroom inaccessibility
  - Queer student representation
  - Collaborate on solidarity statement and to hold university accountable

- **Council Goals**
  - Council Goals
  - Increased communication
  - Increased empathy for self and each other
  - Usage of Robert’s rules
  - Less interruptions
  - More understanding of committees and council purpose
- Needs of council chair – look to “me” and respecting speakers list
- Supportive governance structures
- Less hostile environments
- More informal discussion spaces
- Using DISA representative to help identify needs of various communities – support between grieving communities

- Dalhousie Goals
  - Responding to struggles of communities affected by political / world events
  - Protocol for responding to tragedies – needs to address ripple effects.
  - Individualized services and culturally relevant services
  - Better compassionate leave

- Action Plan
  - Allocation of money to councillors for mental health (policy development with executives and VPFO)
  - Mandate anti-oppressive training for professors (discuss with Dalhousie faculty association)
  - Accessibility at council (terminology, point of order relays the race mentality, colonial) – continue to use the microphone
  - Mental health week should be a annual programming priority
  - Creating a mental health toolbox on the DalSafe App / Healthline
  - Organizing wellness programming (recreational activities)
  - Educating staff and streamlining communications

**Delving Deeper into Tacking Food Insecurity on Campus**

*What are ways we can tackle food insecurity on campus?*

- Increase capacity of DSU Food Bank. Expand Food Bank to Sexton campus.
- More subsidies for DSU food market e.g. Dal sponsorship?
- Promotions
- Feed NS partnership
- Alumni association
- Leftover food from Chartwells
- Loaded Ladle security
- Community engagement (on Facebook especially)
- “Community Fridge” with donated food (take some/ leave some concept)
- Find out what happens at residence dining halls leftover food
- Tupperware in meal halls should be allowed
- Meal card with Dal (also with Chartwells)
- Carleton campus – just a Starbucks (no other options)
- More affordable food options
- Killiam next to second cup
- Grawood delivery
- More coupons for food places on campus
- LSC food place
- “Food atrium” (big fridge)
Part 5: Background Research

Tackling Food Insecurity

Food security is broadly defined as having physical, social, and economic access to sufficient quantities of safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs for a healthy life (Lammers et al., 2009), however definitions can vary. In the context of Canada, food security includes physical access to affordable and appropriate food, retail venues, sufficient income, and that people can obtain food in a dignified manner (Dowler & Connor, 2012). The existence and use of food banks indicate an extreme and systemic food security problem, since food insecure individuals and households tend to view them as a last resort (Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2014). Food banks are only one symptom of a broader problem. Therefore, studying the issue of food insecurity solely through food banks is too narrow of an approach. This approach implied by the neoliberal “consumerist model”. This places responsibility on individuals for navigating the economic system and making prudent food-purchasing decisions (Dowler & O’Connor, 2012).

Healthy and accessible food from a nutritional and economic perspective is incontrovertibly the major component of food security. However, an exclusive focus on this ignores the role of food in personal contentment, interpersonal relationships and cultural engagement (Hanlon & Carlisle, 2014). Providers of food aid in Canada point to increasingly inadequate social assistance programs as the cause of increased reliance on their programming—around half of food bank users are on welfare and another almost 20% receive disability payments (HungerCount, 2014). Food banks run by charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations are the main social response to hunger in Canada. However, neither provincial nor federal governments have coherent policy responses to food insecurity other than the promotion of food banks (Tarasuk et al., 2014).

Analysis from Food Banks Canada indicates that 2.09% of Nova Scotians use food banks and only 0.8% of these are enrolled in post-secondary institutions (HungerCount 2014). Food, shelter and personal expenses account for an average of 50% of a university student’s expenditures; tuition and school-related expenses account for the other half (O’Neill, 2010). Under this policy model, where food insecurity is framed as an individual hardship ameliorated by charitable acts, the government does not have responsibility to ensure access to food as a human right (Dowler & O’Conner, 2012). Therefore, they are not obliged to intervene to, for example regulate wages in relation to food prices.

Feed Nova Scotia collected for HungerCount, show that in March 2012, around 230 individuals relying on student loans as their primary source of income used food banks (Feed Nova Scotia, 2013). These students likely only represent a small fraction of those students facing food insecurity, because the majority of those facing food insecurity do not resort to food banks. In addition to the negative effects that food insecurity has on individuals cited above, students are likely to experience reduced academic performance. For instance, skipping breakfast is associated with decreased cognitive performance (e.g., alertness, attention, memory, processing of complex visual display, problem solving) among students. Users by faculty:

- Science - 32%
- TYP 9%
- Com Sci 18%
- IDS 4%
- MGMT 14%
- Arts 23%
- 50% Int’l students

Fifty percent of users pay for the majority of their school using student and bank loans. Only a few students use scholarships, and they account for a small percentage of those students’ income. Additionally, 75% of our survey participants 21 learned about the DSUFB through word-of-mouth. Students without a friend or acquaintance willing to divulge their use of food aid are unlikely to know of this service. DSUFB users frequently reported learning of the service by word of mouth. The authors of this report recommend better and more visible advertising of the DSUFB. This will make the DSUFB accessible to students experiencing food insecurity that do not know of the service. The DSUFB shall continue research. Seen in Appendix D, the DSUFB currently collects data on visit frequency. However, a more detailed longitudinal study would not only add validity to the results of this study, but also reveal the effects of changing tuition fees, and allow a finer-grain breakdown of user populations. Therefore, the province should reinstate a tuition cap. The province should also work with the federal government to change student visas so International students can work while attending school in Nova Scotia.

**Mental Health & Wellness**

In a 2016 survey, 15% of postsecondary students in Ontario said they’d been treated for depression or diagnosed with it in the previous year. For anxiety, the figure was 18%. This was a large increase from 2013, when 10% of students reported depression and 12% reported anxiety. According to a focus group conducted by the Dalhousie Budget Advisory Committee, Stress, anxiety, and sleep difficulties remain the top 3 issues affecting Dalhousie Students performance. Further data shows the shift from 2013 to 2018 can be seen below:

- Stress - 2013 = 38.6%, 2016 = 42.2%, 2019 = 41.9%
- Anxiety - 2013 = 28.4%, 2016 = 32.5%, 2019 = 34.6%
- Sleep Issues - 2013 = 27.1%, 2016 = 28.4%, 2019 = 29.0%
- Suicidal thoughts - 2013 = 7.6%, 2016 = 11.6%, 2019 = 14%
- Engaged in self harm - 2013 = 5.7%, 2016 = 8.5%, 2019 = 9.9%
- Attempted suicide - 2013 = 1.2%, 2016 = 1.8%, 2019 = 2.2%

**Strategic Planning Strategy & Frameworks**

*Emergent Strategy Framework- Adrienne Maree Brown*
“Emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions” (p. 3)

“Strategy is a military term simply meaning a plan of action towards a goal.” “Emergence strategies are ways for humans to practice complexity and grow the future through relatively simple action” (p. 20)

Inch wide mile deep: “Work that prioritizes depth in community organizing and understands that meaningful scale depends on deep transformative work, rather than surface widespread work.” (p. 20)

Margaret Wheatley’s Leadership and the New Science Key Learnings: “Everything is about relationships, critical connections; chaos is an essential process that we need to engage; the sharing of information is fundamental for organizational success; and vision is an invisible field that binds us together, emerging from relationships and chaos and information” (p. 27)

Principles of Emergent Strategy:
- “Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small)
- Change is constant (Be like water)
- There is always enough time for the right work
- There’s a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it
- Never a failure, always a lesson
- Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy)
- Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass - build the resilience by building the relationships.
- Less prep, more presence.
- What you pay attention to grows.” (p. 41-42)

Strategies of Change Framework - Duncan Green
- “Despite the fact that much of human history has been about attempting to create different realities, we do not understand the process of social change very well” (p. xi-xii)
- “Do we want to make the current system function better, or do we seek something that tackles the deeper structures of power? The answer is ‘all of the above’” (p. 1-6)
- Who are the change agents → People bring their own worldviews to the question of change. (p. 1-6)
- Milton Friedman - Advisor to Ronald Reagan. Stated that only a crisis, actual or perceived, produces real change. Certainly not an aspiration figure but this is demonstrated by the response to AIDS crisis, which WAS a crisis but was not perceived as such by straight Americans.
- Strategy is a portfolio of experiments that compete and evolve over time. Keep alternatives alive and available and build trust amount key individuals.
- Principles:
- Be Flexible - be willing to shelve your current plan and keep your eyes open for new opportunities.
- Seek fast and ongoing feedback - you need to be able to detect changes in real time.
- Success if often accidental - need to be prepared to respond to accidental successes as early as possible.
- Undertake multiple parallel experiments - Pursue lean start-ups based on best guesses and using a cycle of experimentation and adaptation.
- Learn by doing and failing - Be ready to discuss, learn, and get feedback on your own impact.
- Identify your rules of thumb - be prepared to have them questioned, tested, and improved.
- Convene and broker relationships - Bring dissimilar local players together to find their own solutions.
- Look for Positive Deviants - Communities need to look within themselves for outliers who succeed. Differs from standard model which is identifying gaps, devising initiatives to fill them in, and disseminating guidance.

- Theories of change - locate a project within a wider analysis of how change comes about. Don’t conflate how change happens with how you intend to change the system. Don’t spend more time talking about your own strategy than the context that determines intervention. (235-255)
- Looking Backwards - Exploring stories of change, broaden the questions you ask and avoid thinking that change came down to the activists involved.
- Looking forward - Acknowledging we can’t anticipate critical junctures so it’s essential to have good feedback and response systems in place. Encourage genuine curiosity about the complexity of our systems. Recognize we make decisions based on our default assumptions. Refer to the ‘informal’ world as an arena of change.
- Work from precedent rather than importing ‘best practice’.
- Power analysis should identify key players, how they relate, and what they’re influenced by. Stimulate ideas for strategies in engaging with main institutions that drive or block change.
- Change = Consciousness & Capabilities + Resources + Social Norms + Laws and Policies
- Implications for activist organizations - Do incentives people work under encourage a flexible approach? Relinquishing command and control let successful innovations spin off if necessary. Review how you treat failure, accountability for learning and results.
- This work is a joy, a privilege, and a responsibility. The problem lies in institutional culture, and progressive change occurs when people take power into their own hands.
Organizational Accountability - Global Affairs Canada

- Organizational Accountability is “the obligation to demonstrate that responsibility is being taken both for the means used and the results achieved in light of agreed expectations.”

- “While no one organization or project is entirely responsible for the achievement of outcomes—especially at higher levels in the results chain—the implementer is responsible for designing a project with achievable expected outcomes”

- Attributes to facilitate that include:
  - expected outcome and output indicators are established,
  - monitoring, including data collection on output and outcome indicators is regularly undertaken,
  - management decisions are informed by the data collected and its assessment,
  - corrective action is undertaken so the expected outcomes can be achieved, and
  - reports on outcomes achieved are supported by evidence.”
Part 6: Published Strategic Plan Format & Next Steps

Strategic Plan Format Publishing

It is the wish of this committee that some form of this report be published to the DSU membership. It is important and a mechanism of accountability so that the membership is aware of the path that the DSU is headed and can ensure the DSU is following through. The report should be designed and made available on the DSU membership. Below is a suggested format for how this information can be presented in a public document:

- Letter from the Strategic Planning Committee Chair
- What Even is the DSU?
  - Mandate Statement
- Why Do we Care?
  - Mission Statement
- What’s in it for Me?
  - List of DSU services
- How Does it Work?
  - DSU Governance Structure Map
  - DSU Staffing Structure Map
- Where is this Going & How will we get There?
  - Strategic priorities
- What’s the Point?
  - Strategic Plan Scope
- Where can I Learn More?
  - Link to social media & website
  - Exec. contact information

Next Steps: DSU Annual Survey

Annual Survey was halted due to COVID-19. I would recommend instituting the survey to take place each year. However, the version that has been completed 2018 – 2019 definitely needs to be updated. The VP Internal has done the prep for the 2019 – 2020 survey and I would recommend continuing from there. It is important to engage with the membership each year through an annual survey. This will support the Executive in determining the pulse of the membership and ensure they are following through with the strategic priority while also meeting the needs of the membership.
Part 7: Referenced Documentation & Reports


(2020). DSUSO Report on Food

(2020). DSU Mental Health Report

(2020). International Student Report


https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard

https://www.cmaj.ca/content/189/48/E1501

https://www.dal.ca/dept/financial-services/budget/campus-budget-sessions.html

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https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/haliFACT2050/maps/map-hazards-in-your-community

https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html