DSU Annual Survey
2018 REPORT
Overview

• The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) represents the collective voice of over 18,000 students studying at Dalhousie University. We advocate for student rights, build community on campus through events, support over 300 societies, and provide focused services to foster a supportive and positive student experience.

• This is the first of a series of DSU Annual Surveys.

• The goal is to develop a benchmark on student satisfaction and awareness of the DSU.

• The survey results will be used to:
  • Provide us with a benchmark of how we’re doing
  • Inform us on ways we can ensure our planning and actions accurately reflect the needs of students
  • Provide us with a broad outreach tool that we can use to consult, collaborate, and gather information from our members

• Overall, we want to achieve legitimacy in our work and ensure we are making informed decisions driven by student consultation.
Response Rate & Communications

• The overall response rate was 25.11% (representing 4645 respondents)

• The survey was open from November 5-30, 2018

• We incentivised the survey with a chance to win a return flight ticket to anywhere in Canada (up to a $1500 value)

• We promoted the survey in three campus-wide emails, via social media, our three media screens in the SUB, and by working with faculty to encourage students to participate
Survey Composition

- There is a total of 41 questions across seven main categories:
  - Demographic
  - Overall DSU satisfaction and awareness
  - DSU businesses and services
  - Priorities and concerns
  - Community
  - Open Questions
Demographics of Student Respondents
• Our largest cohort of responders were from Studley and Sexton

• Response rates decreases as students increased in their year of study

• Primarily undergraduate students participated in the survey, this coincides with the general composition of students studying at Dalhousie

• Most Dalhousie students are full-time
Most survey participants are between 20-23. This coincides with a high response rate of 1st year students who tend to be in their early 20s.

The majority of survey participants identified as female.

Roughly 22% of survey respondents identify as being racialized, Black, or Indigenous.
• Most students work full-time throughout the summer and work 1-20 hours in Fall/Winter
• Average debt ranged greatly – students either had little-to-no debt or high debt
Over 65% of survey respondents are living with roommates or on their own, off campus and apart from family.
How Students Engage with the DSU

- 14% of students work or volunteer with the DSU
- 28% of students are part of a DSU society
- 40% of survey respondents voted in the election
Satisfaction & Awareness of the DSU
“I FEEL I UNDERSTAND WHAT THE DALHOUSIE STUDENT UNION OFFERS ME”

“IA M SATISFIED WITH THE DALHOUSIE STUDENT UNION”
- Students were most satisfied with our building space and events and programming
- Students were least satisfied with our employment and volunteer opportunities
For both events and businesses, students learned about the DSU through Facebook, posters, and Instagram, respectively. This tendency changes with job/volunteer opportunities where students instead get information from the DSU website opposed to Instagram.
HOW DSU EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS LEARNED ABOUT THEIR POSITION

- Website
- Print Material
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Email
- None of the Above

WILLINGNESS OF DSU EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER TO RECOMMEND DSU AS GOOD PLACE TO WORK

- Yes
- No
The number one outreach tool for the DSU is email platforms and Facebook. Note that tabling and in-class announcements polled as the least effective ways that students found out about DSU activities. The DSU will re-engage these strategies in the coming year to better evaluate their effectiveness in the future.
DSU Event Participation
• The top reasons that students participate in DSU events is to have fun, make friends, and to feel as though they are part of Dalhousie
• Time was noted as the biggest reason students did not attend events
DSU Businesses: Satisfaction & Use
The Grawood

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE GRAWOOD

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- Aware of it, but I haven’t used it
- I am unaware of this business

FREQUENCY AS GRAWOOD CUSTOMER PER YEAR

- 1-3 times
- 4-10 times
- 11-20 times
- 21+ times
- Never
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH CAMPUS COPY

FREQUENCY AS CAMPUS COPY CUSTOMER PER YEAR

VERY SATISFIED
SOMewhat SATISFIED
SOMewhat DISSATISFIED
VERY DISSATISFIED
I AM UNAWARE OF THIS BUSINESS

1-3 TIMES
4-10 TIMES
11-20 TIMES
21+ TIMES
NEVER
The T-Room

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE T-ROOM

FREQUENCY AS T-ROOM CUSTOMER PER YEAR

NEVER

1-3 TIMES

4-10 TIMES

21+ TIMES
The SUB Food Court

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE SUB FOOD COURT

FREQUENCY SUB FOOD COURT CUSTOMER PER YEAR

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- Aware of it but I haven’t used it
- I am unaware of this business

1-3 Times
4-10 Times
21+ Times
11-20 Times
Never
Student Union Building: Satisfaction & Use
Students who experience the SUB tend to be frequent visitors.

Students mostly come to the SUB for the Food Court, Bookstore, and Study Space.

8% of students are unaware of what the SUB is.
DSU Support & Community
Students strongly agreed with the above statements, showing overwhelming support of the projects and services the DSU has prioritized this year.
Students want the DSU to focus on quality and cost of education followed by safety and wellness.

- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **COST OF LIVING**
- **SUSTAINABILITY**
- **CAMPUSS INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **SAFETY AND WELLNESS**
- **QUALITY EDUCATION**
- **EDUCATION COST**
Overall, students feel part of the Dalhousie community and that Dalhousie is a good place for people like them.
Open Questions

The last three survey questions had open text boxes that respondents could type their feedback into. Given the magnitude and complexity of responses, the top 10-15 categorical trends of each are reported. All relevant data will be used to help inform future decision making.
How can your Student Union serve you better?

1. General feeling of alienation/being ignored from satellite campus’ (particularly Sexton) as well as Graduate Students, Mature Students and Distance Students.

2. Students want to see more study space and cheaper/diverse (Vegan, Vegetarian, Halal) food options in the SUB and to a certain degree across Dalhousie.

3. A strong opinion that the Executive level of the DSU should advocate for broadly felt student issues, particularly tuition, and not focus on community/identity specific topics.

4. A clear and present desire for better communication of what the DSU provides, its processes, events/programs, and opportunities.

5. Increased volunteer and job opportunities.
How can your Student Union serve you better?
(continued)

6. Frustration in relationship to slow or lack of e-mail responses, particularly from Executives.

7. A desire for more and appropriate consultation.

8. An identified need for attention and representation for students with disabilities with some emphasis on invisible disabilities.

9. A general lack of understanding of the DSU’s relationship to Faculties and Faculty Societies.

10. Generally finding more avenues to lessen student financial burden.
If your Student Union could do one thing to improve your Dalhousie experience, what would it be?

1. Opportunities to connect with others.
2. Additional seating in the SUB.
3. Working to lower tuition.
4. Providing more information about the DSU.
5. Arranging later building hours, particularly Killam.
6. Improving food choices at Sexton Campus.
7. Organizing groups/activities for mature and/or graduate students.
8. More programming at Sexton Campus.
If your Student Union could do one thing to improve your Dalhousie experience, what would it be? (continued)

9. International focused events, aiding interaction between international students and domestic students.

10. Making events more well known and how to get involved.

11. More volunteer and employment opportunities.

12. Increased mental health programming, particularly focused on stress and anxiety reduction.

13. Providing diverse recreational activities including sporting events, pool/ping pong tables, arcade machines, etc.

14. Events which help attract and facilitate more introverted and shy students. For example, a paint night.

15. Not focusing on identity politics at top level of DSU.
Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

1. Students expressed a need for more quality and affordable options. The DSU Market, SUB Food Court, and Loaded Ladle were praised.

2. Students questioned how their fees were being spent, noting that they didn’t understand the value of the DSU or its purpose. Students generally disagreed with the DSU’s political role.

3. Participants noted that the DSU should focus on academic issues, especially lobbying for lowering tuition and fees.

4. Students noted that they didn’t feel part of the community, particularly those studying via Distance, in Professional Programs, mature students, graduate students, or aren’t on Studley.

5. Sexton students noted feeling dissatisfied with their campus, particularly “outdated” spaces and furnishings. Overall, students desired more quality study space.
Is there anything else you would like to share with us? (continued)

6. Students noted finding it hard to participate because of their time commitments and that programming didn’t connect with them.

7. Students noted a general lack of awareness of the DSU including its purpose and what it does.

8. Students are unaware of the DSU’s role in societies and that they were concerned around the "red-tape" around society ratification.

9. Study space in the SUB is noted as good, but needing more attention and individual seating for those not working in groups.

10. Students on Sexton, AC, and Carlton campuses note feeling disconnected from the DSU and more effort be prioritized in doing campus outreach.