

Dalhousie Student Union Report to the Board of Governors

Kathleen Reid, President

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It has been a busy fall for us at the Dalhousie Student Union, with programming, advocacy, and much more! If board members have any inquiries about specific subjects or areas of work please do not hesitate to reach out to myself at the email listed above.

OPERATIONS

Renovations

The third and final stage of renovations to the Dalhousie Student Union Building is now complete. The new SUB is well equipped to serve students needs better than before, with more study space in our new atrium, more collaborative space in the new society hub, a more accessible and student friendly Grawood, and much more. Our team is currently working on the final aspects of the project, such as Wayfinding, external signage, landscaping, and furniture. We are also working on planning a grand opening. Please stay tuned for more information on the event.

PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

Orientation Week

O-Week was a huge success; run by VP Student Life (Kelsey Keddy) the Orientation Week Programming Coordinator (Katie MacLellan) the Orientation Sponsorship Coordinator (Mackenzie Arnold), the Planning Committee, and over 200 volunteer O-Week Leaders! Seven days of programming including field party, Dal 101, Dalypics, Rock the boat, and so much more. This year new programming including Cultural Café, and Sea the City (a scavenger hunt to help students get oriented with Halifax)

Dalfest

Dalfest was also a huge success! We had six acts over 2 nights, and tons of students come out to enjoy the festival. The variety of genres was successful in welcoming back all students who came out to the event.

Society and Volunteer Expo

The Society and Volunteer Expo was a hit! We had over 200 Dal Societies and Volunteer Organizations set up booths in the quad to give information and volunteer opportunities for students. There were free Sno-cone's, popcorn, and cotton candy, as well as some food trucks with a limited amount of discounted coupons to offset costs for students. Keep an eye out for the sexton society fair is coming up soon!

Green Week

The DSU Sustainability Office completed a full week of sustainability centered programming on campus. From September 25th to October 1st students could attend free events such as hikes, educational workshops, speakers, and much more.

Respect Week

The DSU ran and partnered on several initiatives throughout respect week, including a “Kindness Krew”; a group of students who went around attempting to spread respect and kindness.

Mental Health Awareness Week

The DSU partnered with Student Health Promotion to run an event to raise awareness about stigmas that, students with mental health problems deal with today.

SERVICES

Health Plan

This year, we have expanded the DSU Health Plan to include dental coverage for students. We have also worked to bring our coverage in line with other Atlantic Canadian schools. We are in the final negotiation stages in creating a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the University on the management of the International Student Health Plan.

DSU Market

The DSU Market is our student run source for local and affordable produce on campus. This service now serves hundreds of students per week on Sexton and Studley Campus, including food box services, deliveries, and market stand sales.

Wellness Room

The SUB Wellness Room is a new space in the SUB open during regular building hours with weekly programming currently offered at free of charge! Offers a variety of programming including yoga, meditation, peer-to-peer mental health, and much more. The space is run by DSU VP Student Life (Kelsey Keddy) with collaboration between DSU, health services, student health promotions, and other student groups.

DSU Equity and Accessibility Office

We have completed the hiring process for the Equity & Accessibility Office. There are two new staff people now – Masuma Khan, the Campaigns and Outreach Coordinator, and Michael Murray, the Research, Training and Campus Relations Coordinator. They have been busy at work since the end of August to run campaigns, and tackle issues of accessibility and equity on campus.

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

Collaboration with Student Services team

We have set up bi-weekly lunch meetings with the Vice Provost Student Affairs, Arig al Shaibah and her team. These are opportunities for us to connect on ongoing projects, updates, and student issues. We also have set up monthly breakfasts with the President and his provost team.

Ombudsperson Person

Collaborating with Arig al Shaibah, Vice-Provost Student Affairs, on the composition of the Ombudsperson steering committee. We have completed the hiring process successfully and are on track to have the ombudsperson in office in November.

ADVOCACY

DSU Sexual Assault and Harassment Phone Line

The Phone Line is currently running from September 3rd until November 3rd from 12(noon) until 12(midnight). Students are still able to call into this peer support, non-judgemental service. We are currently in the process of evaluating options for moving forward with Survivor Support Initiatives on campus, and have been holding strategy sessions with students throughout the month of October.

National Student Day of Action

Dalhousie students are joining students from across the country in taking to the streets on November 2nd to demand accessible post-secondary education for all. We're demanding from our provincial and federal government to: eliminate tuition fees, grants not loans, increase government funding, better support for Indigenous learners, and safer campuses. We'll be hosting a feeder rally here on campus, before marching to Victoria Park where we will be joined with students from other Universities and Colleges across Halifax, and then marching to Province House.

External Action Committee

The External Action Committee meets every two weeks (or every week around major actions) to discuss various student issues. This semester, we have focused on making sure students are aware about municipal issues as well as gearing up for the National Student Day of Action. We will also be looking to create a Racialized and Indigenous Students Collective as well as starting the process to expand all of our Student Issues Campaigns.

Municipal Elections

Dalhousie Student Union partnered with the Canadian Federation of Students to bring the Generation Vote Campaign which highlights 5 issues that are important to students: affordable housing, arts and culture, fair wages, food security, and public transportation. We engaged with students on all Halifax campuses through tabling and social media. We also hosted a Candidates Fair and Mayoral Debate on September 28th in the Student Union Building to highlight student's participation in the election, and candidate's views on student issues.