



Students Nova Scotia (StudentsNS) is a not for profit and nonpartisan advocacy group that represents Nova Scotia post-secondary students. Our members study at Acadia, Saint Mary's, and St. Francis Xavier Universities, as well as the Kingstec and Annapolis Valley Campuses of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC).

Mission

It is the mission of StudentsNS to represent the collective interests and priorities of post-secondary students in Nova Scotia. In pursuit of this mission, StudentsNS will:

- Conduct research to identify issues affecting the accessibility, affordability, accountability and quality of post secondary education in Nova Scotia;
- Develop credible and constructive policy to address these challenges
- Communicate research and policy to both educate and affect the opinions of stakeholders, Nova Scotians and government;
- Lobby the government to affect their post-secondary education policy;
- Organize campaigns to effectively articulate the needs and interests of our members; and
- Build partnerships to accomplish our vision.

Vision

StudentsNS envisions a Nova Scotia post-secondary education system that is *accessible*, *affordable*, of the highest *quality*, and that includes *student voices* in decision-making.

Values

The foundation upon which StudentsNS is built is the belief that post-secondary education can play a fundamental role in allowing both the individual and society to realize their full potential. StudentsNS' values are pillars built on this foundation, and the organization shapes its decision-making around these values.

- **Accessibility:** Every qualified Nova Scotia resident who wishes to pursue post-secondary education should be able to do so, irrespective of their financial situation, socioeconomic or ethnic background, physical, psychological or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, geographic location, or any other factor exogenous to qualification.
- **Affordability:** The cost of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia should not cause undue hardship upon any student, restrict their ability to pursue the career



path they choose, or make them financially unable to live in the community that they choose.

- **Quality:** Policies, programs and services in post-secondary education should meet student expectations to help prepare them for lifelong success, including their citizenship, careers and personal wellbeing.
- **Student Voice:** Nova Scotia students must be empowered to actively participate in setting their post-secondary systems' direction via engagement through their representative student bodies, within the post-secondary institutions themselves, and through the broader democratic process.

2020-2021 Annual Plan

StudentsNS' 2020-2021 Annual Plan was formally approved at StudentsNS' Annual General Meeting on August 13th, 2020.

- **Goals** are the overarching objectives that work to achieve StudentsNS' 2020-21 Strategic Plan.
- **Action Items** are direct actions taken by StudentsNS in pursuit of **Goals**.
- **Outcomes** are the immediate results of the **Action Items**.
- **Measures** provide an evaluation and demonstrate how the **Outcomes** advance the **Goals**.

The 2020-21 Annual Plan presents goals across seven primary domains:

1. Organizational Sustainability
2. Equity and Inclusion
3. Post-Secondary Advocacy
4. COVID-19 Impacta
5. Communication and Outreach
6. Provincial Election Preparation
7. Research and Policy Development

Goal: Organizational Sustainability

This goal aims to revitalize StudentsNS' organizational sustainability by reviewing and updating the current structure and processes of StudentsNS governance, while ensuring that our organizational practices are inclusive of a diverse range of student voices.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Conduct a SNS Staffing review in order to identify current shortcomings and potential areas for improvement.	Identify limitations of current staffing structure and develop recommendations for ways in which SNS can improve this model.	Formal Staffing Review report to be presented to the Board of Directors.
Review structure of the Board to determine how to better integrate underrepresented groups on campus directly into SNS governance.	Increased opportunities for underrepresented groups to contribute to SNS' work.	Conduct surveys and focus groups in member schools, and develop a formal strategy for this integration process.
Review structure of the Board to clearly determine and define the role of board members and board officers.	Increased role clarity for board members and officers (including the vice chair), and alleviate some stress for other staff members.	Conduct an internal review of the mandate of all positions.
Re-examine SNS' fee & voting structure.	Equitable voting rights and financial responsibilities for all SNS members.	Board approval of the 2021/2022 Fee Structure, and distribution of a Voting Structure report.

Goal: Equity and Inclusion

This goal seeks to ensure that StudentsNS’ consultation efforts include outreach to a diverse range of student and community groups, and that our advocacy asks reflect this consultation.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Build relationships with diverse stakeholders impacted by post-secondary education including but not limited to; Indigenous groups, African Nova Scotian groups and community organizations.	Increased ability to represent and advocate effectively on behalf of marginalized groups	Attend as many diverse events at home institutions and within the community, and actively pursue relationship-building opportunities with BIPOC students on campus.
Develop a SNS consultation framework which outlines outreach to relevant representative groups.	Constant consultation and collaboration with representative groups on member campuses Improve lobbying efforts on asks regarding BIPOC students.	Establishment of a consultation framework for use in all SNS board decisions.
Work with NSCC students & campus representatives to ensure inclusion, to eliminate barriers to participation & ensure college perspectives are included in decision making.	NSCC participation in all decision making and flexible scheduling to accommodate NSCC student schedules.	Establishing a meeting structure that works with NSCC student schedules and establishing consultation with NSCC students on all policy and governance documents.

Goal: Post-Secondary Advocacy

This goal aims to improve StudentsNS' advocacy efforts by defining relevant post-secondary issues and building relationships with government and political parties.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Continued advocacy for consistent OER support.	Consistent OER support in Nova Scotia.	Annualized financial OER support from the government.
Advocate for targeted, upfront grants to aid in reducing unmet need for first generation and rural students.	Development of grants dedicated to student demographics disproportionately impacted by unmet need.	Provincially distributed grants to students facing unmet need as a means to pursue post-secondary education.
Advocate to the provincial government for increasing the ratio of needs based to merit based scholarships on campuses.	Students increasingly receiving scholarships based on economic, financial or social need, as opposed to grade or participation merit.	Provincial government mandating a structural change to scholarship distribution by prioritizing needs-based scholarships.
Advocate for the continuation and diversification of WIL efforts so that students from all academic backgrounds receive high-quality work experience in their degree.	Students from all programs and faculties have access to work integrated learning opportunities during the span of their degree.	Provincial instruction to post-secondary institutions to adopt Work Integrated Learning opportunities for each faculty.
Advocate for greater emphasis on financial literacy in the secondary education systems to prepare students appropriately for post-secondary.	Youth in Nova Scotia are more financially literate before starting post-secondary.	Implementation of financial literacy programming in the secondary school curriculum

Goal: Addressing COVID-19 Impacts

This goal aims to ensure that our advocacy work is informed by the specific challenges students are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Advocate for increased financial assistance for students related to COVID-19 relief, including but not limited to technology, international students, etc.	Increased educational affordability for students who are most directly impacted by COVID-19. Increased availability for online learning	Government and political parties consider implementing our recommendations.
Advocate for COVID testing and treatment that is accessible and affordable for all students .	All students who require testing or treatment related to COVID-19 have easy access to those resources without experiencing financial barriers.	Government and political parties consider implementing our recommendations.
Advocate for expansion of mental health services to ensure these services can provide support to a diverse range of students	Students can easily access mental health resources that reflect the diversity of the student population.	Government and political parties consider implementing our recommendations.
Advocate for increased provincial and institutional promotion of virtual mental health services such as HealthyMindsNS.	Increased uptake of HealthyMindsNS services.	Government and political parties consider implementing our recommendations.

Goal: Communication and Outreach

This goal aims to develop StudentsNS' position as a relevant stakeholder and commentator within the post-secondary education sector by communicating more effectively with students, stakeholders, the public and the media.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Develop a network of StudentsNS Alumni and increase engagement with this network through regular updates.	Increased collaboration and engagement between current SNS Board and past alumni.	Host an event that promotes collaboration between Board and alumni, and develop a regular newsletter providing updates to this network.
Develop a StudentsNS consultation framework to guide interactions and feedback collection from relevant student groups.	Increased engagement and consultation with students and student groups within member schools.	Creation of a concrete framework including feedback mechanisms that can be used to inform StudentsNS advocacy.
Increase SNS representation on member school campuses.	Students are more aware of and engaged with SNS' work and mandate.	Distributing SNS merchandise to students through O-Week and other events, and having a physical SNS presence at on-campus events.
Increase networking opportunities and outreach with stakeholder groups and government in an increasingly virtual environment.	Strengthened stakeholder relationships.	Host and attend virtual events to meet and engage with stakeholders.
Develop opportunities to increase engagement and collaboration with non-member schools.	Increased collaboration between member and non-member schools on relevant student issues.	Exploring the development of a formalized observer status for non-member schools.

Goal: Provincial Election Preparation

This goal seeks to ensure that StudentsNS is prepared to execute a high quality and effective Get Out the Vote campaign should a provincial election be called.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Develop and prepare to execute a clear launch plan for a provincial Get Out The Vote campaign.	StudentsNS is prepared to execute a Get Out the Vote campaign as soon as the election is called.	Get Out the Vote manual, branding materials and other resources are assembled in advance of the election being called.
Engage in pre-election outreach with candidates from all parties.	All candidates will be aware of StudentsNS and our advocacy priorities.	Introductory meetings with all interested candidates.
Engage in outreach to all candidates for party leadership throughout the leadership race.	All candidates for party leadership will be aware of StudentsNS and our advocacy priorities.	Introductory meetings with all interested candidates for party leadership.
Should an election campaign take place during the 2020-21 term, plan and execute a leadership debate in collaboration with interested candidates.	StudentsNS plays a non-partisan role in promoting student engagement with the provincial election.	Involvement in a successful leadership debate for the provincial election.
Should an election campaign not take place during the 2020-21 term, all primary delegates should develop an exit report that can be distributed to incoming executives.	Incoming board members are prepared to execute a Get Out The Vote campaign.	Exit reports on behalf of all outgoing primary StudentsNS delegates are circulated to incoming delegates.

Goal: Research and Policy Development

This goal aims to further develop the research and policy of StudentsNS by defining clear targets, topics and projects for the year.

Action Items	Outcome	Measure
Revise all 5 existing SNS Policies, utilizing the PCR model of development.	All SNS policies reflect current student issues and provide additional background information.	5 current policies are updated and passed by the Policy Committee.
Develop 3 new SNS Policies, utilizing the PCR model of development.	New policies are representative of existing advocacy priorities and student issues.	3 new policies are updated and passed by the Policy Committee.
Publish at least one policy paper specific to current student issues.	StudentsNS increases their strong, well-researched positions.	Students, government and stakeholders engage with StudentsNS' new positions.
Create and distribute a high quality pre-budget submission and advocacy document.	StudentsNS' recommendations are considered and SNS' relationship with government stakeholders is further strengthened.	StudentsNS' recommendations are implemented or discussed by political parties.