



## The Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations

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### ACTION PLAN 2008 – 09

prepared by Kelly Wilson, ANSSA Executive Director

#### introduction

The upcoming year presents significant opportunity for ANSSA. Through effective planning and engagement, we can continue to build and entrench our organizational successes. We are met with an opportunity for organizational growth and stability and are in a position to be *the* voice of students in Nova Scotia.

The following document is produced from recommendations made at the July 15, 2008 Planning Retreat. It is intended to serve as a guideline of actions, activities and ideas that ANSSA will implement over the next seven months. This document is broken into seven key areas: lobbying activities and priorities, communications and campaigns, member retention and development, organizational development, accountability, finances and planning and policy development and research. This plan also assigns a project lead and timeline for delivery of each of the activities.

#### lobbying activities

In an effort to effect change and raise ANSSA's profile, members regularly meet with government officials, bureaucrats, and youth party representatives. To strengthen ANSSA's lobbying efforts, ANSSA will undertake the following initiative's this year:

1. 2008 – 09 ADVOCACY PLAN

The Advocacy Plan is intended to detail and provide direction to our lobbying priorities. This document is intended to identify an audience for each priority and outline strategies and actions.

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: September 2008*

2. LOBBY DAY

Lobby Day creates an opportunity for ANSSA members to meet with a number of MLAs in a short period of time to communicate and reinforce ANSSA's priorities. The goal of this lobbying effort is three-fold: make education a priority in the government's pre-election budget, create momentum for our annual lobby priorities, and influence the higher education platform of the opposition parties.

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: February 2009*

3. CONSTITUENCY TOUR

Constituency tours have proven to be an effective means of raising our organizational profile and communicating our policy priorities. By reaching MLA's 'at home' ANSSA is reinforcing it's commitment to represent all Nova Scotian students. Face to face meetings facilitate stronger relationships between ANSSA and individual MLA's. In addition to meeting with MLA's this year, ANSSA will broaden it's scope and develop relationships with regional development authorities, local media, local non-profits and other opinion makers. By expanding our scope of stakeholders, ANSSA hopes to develop a wider base of support from which to launch the Plan or Perish Campaign.

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson

Timeline: Fall 2008

#### 4. SUMMER BBQ W/ HSA, ANSSA & CASA

The 2008 Summer BBQ was met with great success. It offered an opportunity for students, politicians, and community stakeholders to mingle over lunch in an informal environment.

*The goal of this event is to strengthen relationships with politicians and community members and offer a token of appreciation for their support throughout the year.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: August 2009*

### **lobbying priorities**

The following are large scale lobby priorities for ANSSA to undertake over the next several months:

#### 1. IMPROVEMENTS TO SFA

2007-2008 saw many significant and groundbreaking changes to student aid in Nova Scotia. ANSSA crafted a submission titled "Students for Nova Scotia: A Blueprint for Student Aid." This report addressed ANSSA's Principles, Concerns and Recommendations for change in Student Financial Aid.

This report was very well received by the government. While successes in SFA have been plenty, ANSSA should re-visit the SFA Submission to the Department and identify which areas might continue to be improved upon. After identifying gaps, a follow up report can be submitted to the Department of Education with recommendations to continue this momentum. The goal of this action is to continue pushing ANSSA's priorities on SFA and build upon our successes in the provincial student loan and grant system.

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson

Timeline: January

#### 2. DIFFERENTIAL TUITION FEES

Differential tuition fees continue to burden Nova Scotia's out-of-province students. The 2008 *Memorandum of Understanding* failed to address this issue; committing to reduce out-of-province fees in year three of the three year agreement. ANSSA believes this does a great disservice to both students and the province of Nova Scotia. Principally, ANSSA believes that a policy which charges out-of-province students differential tuition fees jeopardizes the inter-provincial mobility of students. From a sustainability stand point, ANSSA recognizes that almost 25% of students in Nova Scotia's Universities are traditionally

from out-of-province. ANSSA also recognizes that enrollment continues to be a challenge for a number of the provinces Universities, notably CBU and Acadia, and more out of province students must be filling seats in these institutions. Demographically, we are aware that Nova Scotia is facing a significant labor shortage and must rapidly switch it's economic capacity into the knowledge based economy. Attracting and retaining these students can provide the province with a significant boost in human resource. *The goal of this priority is to encourage the government to invest in out of province students and create equal opportunities for students wishing to study in Nova Scotia.*

*Project Lead: Kelly & Interested Board Members.*

*Timeline: Lobby Day*

### 3. EARLY OUTREACH

Educational advancement is affected by social, culture, motivational, academic, and financial opportunities. When any of these identified areas are neglected, our children's scope of opportunity narrows. The Early Outreach project will seek to map out outreach programs at each grade level, with a focus on P-12 and create a list of developmental resources available to youth. Programs of interest would include social services (ie. Breakfast programs), leadership opportunities, and self-esteem development programs. *The goal of this project is to establish gaps in community programming and communicate how these gaps act as a non-financial barrier to post-secondary education.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: April 2008*

### 4. FEDERAL FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

The Federal per-student funding mechanism creates a serious burden for Nova Scotia students who have recently moved to the province. Through the Canadian Social Transfer, provinces are allocated federal funding based on a per-capita equation. This arrangement does a disservice to provinces, such as Nova Scotia, who import a high percentage of their post secondary students. Nova Scotia's institutions deal with this funding discrepancy by charging out of province students a much higher tuition fee. ANSSA believes that the federal government should allocate funding for post secondary institutions through a per-student formula. *The goal of this lobby priority is to provide greater access for out-of-province students to Nova Scotia's post secondary institutions and improve the financial capacity of the province's underfunded institutions.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: Fall 2009*

### 5. "PLAN OR PERISH"

2007-08 saw two key successes for students in Nova Scotia. Stable and predictable funding through the MOU and capital investments in our institutions through the crown share work to mitigate potential damage to Nova Scotia's post secondary system. This three year plan has provided some breathing room, and an opportunity for ANSSA to show leadership on the direction of PSE in Nova Scotia. The "Plan or Perish" campaign will seek to address challenges that our Institutions and Province will face in "Year Four."

"Plan or Perish" is a three pronged approach:

- Starting Position: Follow up from SFA review

- Crisis-Point: “Year 4”: Sustainability of the post-secondary education system
- Opportunity: Higher education's relationship and role in creating, supporting, and encouraging economic and social prosperity in Nova Scotia.

The “Plan or Perish” Campaign will seek to engage students, faculty, business leaders and community stakeholders in developing a sense of purpose for Nova Scotia's Post-Secondary Institutions. *Through the “Plan or Perish” campaign, ANSSA will aim to create publicity and discussion around the future of post secondary education in Nova Scotia.*

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson and interested Board Members

Timeline: Periodically throughout the year, as determined by Board Members.

## **communications and campaigns**

### **1. ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

Given that a provincial election will likely be called at some point within the next 7 months, ANSSA should begin preparations as soon as possible. Mike Tipping (Chair 2006-2008) created an ANSSA Election Strategy (see attached). This document serves as a excellent backbone to our upcoming provincial election plan. It was however, crafted in anticipation of a summer 2007 election and consequently requires an update. A revision of this document is a necessary step in ensuring that our election strategy is up to date and relevant. *The goal of this document is to ensure that ANSSA is equipped with an effective lobby agenda when the provincial election is announced.*

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson

Deadline: October BOD

### **2. WEBSITE UPDATES AND ENHANCEMENTS**

The new ANSSA website is designed to maximize user engagement. Mike Tipping has been contracted by ANSSA to develop a new interactive website. *This new website will increase user engagement and ideally increase traffic to the site.*

Project Lead: Mike Tipping / Kelly Wilson

Timeline: September 2008

### **3. MEMBER COMMUNICATION**

In an effort to develop a more streamlined method of communication between home office and members, the Executive Director will send out bi-monthly email updates the the Board and other other interested members. The 'ANSSA Notes' blog also provides members and the larger community with information on current issues in PSE. *The goal of these communication tools are to keep the membership aware of current and future issues at ANSSA, within the PSE sector generally, and to increase accountability within the organization.*

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson

Timing: September, ongoing

## **member retention and development**

### **1. CAMPUS VISITS**

During October and November 2008, Kelly and any other interested ANSSA member's will

tour each of our member schools and communities. Over the course of two or three days, the ANSSA ED and other members will visit with each student union and their respective councils. In addition to connecting with each Union's Council, we will attempt to meet with campus political organizations, student newspapers, and interested social / community organizations. *The goal of the campus visits are to strengthen ANSSA organizational networks and reach out to other students through non-traditional networks.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson and VP of each respective University.*

*Timeline: October & November 2008*

## 2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-ANSSA SCHOOLS

Throughout the year, ANSSA should make a conscious effort to engage our non-ANSSA member schools. Our relationship with Cape Breton University Students' Union has been very positive to date. ANSSA is committed to maintaining lines of communication with CBUSU by maintaining open lines of communications between our organization. We are eager to maintain their participation at our Board meetings and Student Assemblies.

ANSSA will also continue to develop our relationship with Mount St Vincent University, the Nova Scotia Community College and Nova Scotia Agricultural College. *The goal is to ensure strong working relationships with non-ANSSA student unions.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: Fall 2008*

## 3. PARTNER'S DINNER

As an organization, ANSSA is looking to strengthen its community and alumni network to build a broad foundation of support for our initiative's. Many of ANSSA's alumni go on to act as key decision makers within our community and ANSSA should capitalize on these relationships. Hosting an annual partner's dinner presents an opportunity for stakeholders, alumni, and current ANSSA members to visit current issues in PSE. *The goal of this initiative is to foster positive community and alumni relationships.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: April / May 2008*

## **organizational development, accountability, finances and planning**

### 1. ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

An action plan is developed at the beginning of each year. *This document is intended to operationalize the goals and priorities laid out at the July 2008 Planning Retreat.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: September 2008*

### 2. LONG TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

As an organization, ANSSA needs to move forward with intention. Strategic planning will enable our organization to get from point A or point B effectively and efficiently. To date, ANSSA is in year three of a three year strategic plan. A three year strategic plan will provide a detailed outline out our history and look into the future to define goals related to Advocacy, Outreach, Finance, Communications, and Human Resources. The Strategic Plan will ensure that current and new ANSSA members continue to play a meaningful role within the

organization. *The goal of the Long Term Strategic Plan is to provide the organization with direction for the future.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: November 2008*

### 3. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Last year, QuickBooks was installed on the home office computer. This software will enable the ED to monitor day to day financial activities and provide the Board of Directors with a financial statement at each month Board Meeting. *Increasing our financial accountability will create a more transparent system for tracking and maintaining our organizational spending.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson & Julia Clarke*

*Timeline: October 2008*

### 4. CONTACT BOOK

Institutional memory is a key element of success for organizations like ANSSA. Tracking our interactions with MPs, MLA's, bureaucrats and other decision-makers will ease transitions and provide background information for new ANSSA members. This contact book will be developed through Microsoft Outlook. It will include basic contact information for the individual, a sequential briefing of ANSSA's communications with them (detailing dates and topic of conversation, and a photo (where possible). *The contact book is intended to provide institutional memory for the organization and provides new ANSSA members with a historical frame of reference for their contacts.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: Ongoing*

## **policy development and research**

### 1. POLICY BOOK

The Policy Book will serve as a comprehensive document containing ANSSA's policy. This book should provide the reader with a clear and comprehensive picture of ANSSA's position on post-secondary education. *The book will contain all policies developed and approved by the ANSSA board and aims to be an effective tool for lobbying government officials and reinforcing ANSSA's mandate as a solution-based organization.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: Spring 2008*

### 2. STUDENT ASSEMBLY-DRIVEN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Student Assembly aims to promote discussion and debate on select policy issues. Delegates will be given the opportunity to hear from a panel of experts on issues relevant to ANSSA policy. This will serve as the springboard from which to launch discussion and formulate ANSSA policy. *The goal of student assembly policy development is to engage ANSSA members on issues of policy development and maintain a high-level of debate on the issues.*

*Project Lead: Kelly Wilson*

*Timeline: Fall 2008 and Spring 2009*

## partnership development

### 1. PER STUDENT FUNDING PARTNERSHIP

The per student funding model adversely affects all Atlantic Provinces and consequently affects students level of funding and quality of education. Developing relationships with other relevant stakeholders on this issue unites and solidifies ANSSA's message. Institutionalizing this partnership by way of written agreement will formalize this agreement and increase legitimacy. *The goal of this partnership is to increase momentum on the per student funding issue.*

Project Lead: Kelly Wilson

Timeline: Fall 2008