

<p>Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations</p>	<p>Annual General Meeting</p>	
	<p><i>Meeting Minutes</i></p>	

Meeting Name:	Annual General Meeting		
Meeting Date:	August 28, 2012		
Meeting Time:	1:00 PM, AST		
Venue:	Call-in	City:	
Attendees			
Member students	Kyle Power (Chair/ASU), Jared Perry (SMUSA), Robert Bossler (ASTSU), Michael MacDonell (SMUSA), Patrick Carruthers (SFXUSU/Treasurer), Michelle Lahey (CBUSU/Vice-Chair), Matthew Rios (ASU), Alana Lawrence (CBUSU), Nick Head-Petersen (SFXUSU), Kat LaFortune (DSU)		
Other attendees:	Jonathan Williams (Executive Director - ED).		
Absent:	Jamie Arron (DSU) (regrets), Aaron Beale (DSU) (regrets - phone trouble).		
Quorum (50% of Members represented?): Yes			

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda

Agenda **approved by general consent.**

4. Approval of the Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting
Minutes **approved by general consent.**

5. Consideration of the Annual Report of the Directors

KP (Chair): 2011-12 was a year of significant challenges and change for ANSSA. In this period we entered Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiations with the Province and, at the same time, worked to substantially expand our organizational capacities. In sum, ANSSA prioritized achieving results for students, strengthening relationships, and growing our organization. I will provide you a short overview of the activities ANSSA pursued in 2011-12. I will finish with a review of the results that we achieved for students.

After determined lobbying, both ANSSA and CFS-NS were invited to partake, as full members, in the Memorandum of Understanding Negotiating Committee. Each student organization was allowed two representatives, and the Board voted for those to be Executive Director Mark Coffin, and Chair of the Board of Directors, Kyle Power. They joined CFS representatives, various university presidents, along with a number of senior bureaucratic staff from government. Judith Ferguson, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, chaired the group. The Memorandum of Understanding establishes the terms by which the Province will agree to fund its universities for the subsequent three years. These terms may include tuition regulation, accountability mechanisms, etc.

A number of sub-committees were formed around issues such as System Quality, The Funding Formula, and System Efficiencies. Students were not invited to sit on these committees, although we were able to make informal submissions to certain committees. We were apprised of sub-committees' work and recommendations, as members of the main group. Overall these groups generated few concrete recommendations for the post-secondary education system, although many of them will be reconstituted under the new MOU agreement moving forward.

The negotiations for the third MOU (2012-2015) lasted well into December, meeting bi-weekly on average though-out the fall semester, although meetings were more frequent through November. Meeting attendance and de-briefings consumed significant amounts of the organization's time, and was the primary focus of the semester. Discussions were concluded and the agreement was signed and presented early in January.

While the agreement continued to reduce funding and allowed tuition to rise, students were able to make significant ground, capping tuition increases at 3% a year and protecting domestic out-of-province students from tuition fee deregulation. The MOU failed to address several issues the process was intended to handle– not least those areas discussed by the sub-committees. With these issues outstanding, it was decided that negotiations would continue under the Partnership agreement, and students were promised inclusion in the Tuition and International Students working groups.

During its December meeting, the Board came to a consensus around the need to expand the capacity and scope of ANSSA by increasing the organization's funding. It was decided that each member, through the processes specified in their own by-laws, would pursue a fee increase for its member students; from \$2.65 to \$5.59 per full-time student.

Three of the members (the Acadia Students' Union - ASU, the St. Francis Xavier University Students' Union – The U and the Cape Breton University Students' Union - CBUSU) passed a fee increase through their councils, while the Dalhousie Student Union did so via a referendum. Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA) – and by extension the Atlantic School of Theology Student Union (ASTSU) through the services agreement between those two unions – also sought the fee increase through a referendum, but failed to obtain student approval.

Upon reflection, the members decided unanimously to move ahead with the fee increase even though it would mean SMUSA's membership would be downgraded to associate status. The ASTSU would later decide to directly finance the difference in fees and retains full member status.

The Board decided that the structure of Student Assemblies, bringing seven people from each member association together to discuss and approve the work of ANSSA, was not an effective way to use the organization's resources. The weekends had morphed into leadership development weekends as student delegates often complained that they felt unprepared or uncomfortable approving policy or organizational decisions. As such, the event was removed from the bylaws and the Board resolved to design a new policy development framework to be implemented in the 2012/13 year.

In early March, ANSSA representatives met with both Marilyn More (Labor and Advanced Education Minister) and Graham Steele (Minister of Finance) in advance of the provincial budget. There the representatives played a selection of student interview clips from the Students Speak Out campaign and requested that improvements be made to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program. These efforts resulted in the allocation of an additional 5.5 million dollars to the 2012-13 provincial budget for student the student assistance program, through increases to the maximum assistance level and the grant/loan ratio.

At the end of April 2012, Mark Coffin left the organization after three years as Executive Director (ED). Mark profoundly shaped ANSSA during his tenure and is responsible for many of our successes. The Board thanks him for his service, his leadership will be missed.

Mark had informed the Board that we was preparing to leave at the end of the MOU cycle, so Mark and the officers began planning his succession and searching for a replacement early in 2012. After a very competitive hiring process, Jonathan Williams was hired. He worked alongside Mark for the month of April, before taking over full authority in May. Even in his short time with the organization, Jonathan has proved to be an apt leader.

ANSSA completed two reports for lobbying purposes in 2011-12. Each was distributed to MLAs and relevant government and university officials.

The first report, "Answers: Higher education's role as a catalyst for social and economic progress in Nova Scotia," highlighted the importance of post-secondary education and aimed to reinforce ANSSA's arguments for greater student support.

The second, "How To Protect Students And Influence Access," highlighted three policy asks directed at government: (1) removing the cap on student assistance, (2) making education and tuition tax credits refundable and (3) moving the undergraduate debt cap to up-front grants.

These two reports were significant pieces of work. They will remain an important resource for the organization into the future.

To summarize our results in 2011-12:

- The grant-loan ratio of provincial student assistance was increased from 30/70 to 35/65 and the maximum assistance amount was increased by \$10 per week, at a total value of \$5.5 million. These changes were in very large part a product of ANSSA's lobbying efforts.
- Undergraduate and graduate student tuition, including for out-of-province domestic students, were regulated at 3% per year increases for the duration of the MOU, though international and professional program tuition remain unregulated.

- The Province and the universities committed to student participation in on-going partnership working groups on Tuition and International Students.
- ANSSA obtained fee increases from students that will dramatically expand the organization's capacity in coming years, particularly by permitting the hiring of two additional staff.

Does anyone have any questions about the annual report (*no*).

Matthew Rios (ASU) **moved** and Mike MacDonell (SMUSA) **seconded the motion** that the 2011-2012 ANSSA Annual Report be approved.

Motion **approved unanimously**.

6. Consideration of the 2011-2012 Audited Statements

PC (Treasurer/SFXUSU): JW (ED) and I have worked through and reviewed the financial statements from 2011-12. JW (ED) has been in touch with the auditor. We ran a significant deficit last year, though JW (ED) is working to recoup some of that money from the student assembly, for reimbursements that were not collected from members in particular. There were particularly over-budget in the student assembly line, as well as technology because we had to buy a new computer, and meetings and travel, largely due to the costs of JW (ED) travelling from Ottawa for his interview in March, and covering costs for JW (ED) and Mark Coffin for the month of April when both were on staff.

We need to be more cautious with our finances in the future, as have seen a string of deficits in recent years, which were not initially budgeted and which has led us to negative cash reserves at the end of the year. In 2012-13 we need to be very sure we do not run another deficit and are disciplined with our spending.

JW (ED): To be fair, previous large deficits done deliberately because the organization saved money year-to-year for strategic spending at important moments. Large deficits therefore run in for the 2009 election, then in 2010-11 because there was great concern about the O'Neal report's recommendation that tuition fees should be de-regulated. Though we may have an election this year, confident we can keep our costs under control.

PC (Treasurer/SFXUSU) The audit, overall, showed no misspending.

Matthew Rios (ASU) **moved** and Robert Bossler (ASTSU) **seconded the motion** that the 2011-2012 ANSSA Audited Statements be approved.

Motion **approved unanimously**.

7. Appointment of Bluenose Accounting as Auditors for 2012-2013

PC (Treasurer/SFXUSU) Bluenose Accounting has been completing our audits for a number of year at a reasonable rate and cleanly. I have no problem hiring them again.

JW (ED): They have been very helpful, coming to the office to meet and offering pro bono advice on our internal governance.

Jared Perry (SMUSA) **moved** and Nick Head-Petersen (SFXUSU) **seconded the motion** that Bluenose Accounting be appointed as Auditors for 2012-13.

Motion **approved unanimously**.

8. Special Resolutions:

Be It Resolved That ANSSA's By-Laws be changed and the organization be renamed Students Nova Scotia.

JW (ED): These are the proposed name change and new by-laws discussed and approved in spirit by the Board of Directors this July at the Annual Planning Retreat. I will not outline the by-law changes in detail here because it is not so much an amendment as a wholesale revision, and we have already gone through the by-laws line-by-line at our July meeting. ML (CBUSU) and I will ensure all the proper files are sent to the Registry of Joint Stocks.

Nick Head-Petersen (SFXUSU) **moved** and Matthew Rios (ASU) **seconded the motion** that ANSSA's By-Laws be changed and the organization be renamed Students Nova Scotia.

Motion **approved unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT