

StudentsNS 2013-14 Annual Plan

This Annual Plan outlines StudentsNS' priorities for 2013-14, as determined by the organization's Board of Directors. This document sets the direction for staff activities and resources in the coming year. The 2014 Annual Report will measure the performance of StudentsNS based on achievement of the results identified in this plan.

The past year was a very successful one for StudentsNS. The organization successfully completed much of its transformation from ANSSA to StudentsNS, most notably rebranding, strengthening internal governance, building operations procedures, expanding staff resources, and a successful full-membership drive at St. Mary's University Students' Association. As the 2013 Annual report outlines, StudentsNS' media and social media impact expanded dramatically, though there remains important work to be done in improving the consistency and reach of student assemblies, as well as the implementation of other campaigns like Mend the Gap and Students Speak Out! At the same time, the research base from which StudentsNS is able to draw upon for policy recommendations improved dramatically. The organization made relatively less progress in building partnerships, though the legitimacy and awareness of the organization as a source of information and informed opinion grew substantially.

This is the first year of StudentsNS' 2013-16 Strategic Plan. The goals and strategies in this annual plan support the long-term objectives of the organization and therefore the goals are the same as those in the Strategic Plan.

The coming year will likely bring significant challenges and opportunities. An election must take place by June 2014, and is very likely to occur during the university academic year (September-April) for the first time since 1998. StudentsNS' primary constituency will be in a better position than in the recent years to participate in voting while connected to their university communities, but StudentsNS must do its part to engage the constituency in the election. The possibility of a change in government could also have important implications for Nova Scotia's post-secondary policy environment. StudentsNS may need to adapt to a new government to achieve the results identified in the Annual Plan and Strategic Plan.

The three-year period of annual university funding cuts is expected to end this year, with the current government committed to resuming funding increases according to a regular escalator. StudentsNS will be challenged to maintain momentum for improvements to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance Program that have delivered important aid to those students with the most need. The youth employment crisis is expected to persist, and will also demand significant attention.

This plan promises to make 2013-14 another building year for StudentsNS, wherein the organization will dramatically expand its policy coverage, community integration, and its impact, raising the profile of student issues and forcing meaningful dialogue on any decisions and conditions that affect students and young people in this province.

2013-14 StudentsNS Goals, Strategies and Measures of Success

Goal	Strategy	Measures of Success
Conduct effective advocacy	Realize priority policy recommendations	Students must approve new or increased ancillary fees
		The Province continues to improve the NS Student Assistance Program
		The University Funding Distribution Formula is redesigned to promote institutional accountability and sustainability
		There are no changes to the current domestic student tuition regulations
		The Province commits to increase university operating grants in 2014-15 at least at the rate of economic growth
		The Province prepares an International Education Strategy
		International students receive immediate MSI coverage upon arrival
		The minimum wage remains tied to the LICO
		The Province introduces an effective and progressive graduate housing incentive
		The Province introduces an effective strategy for addressing the youth employment crisis
	University reporting and transparency is improved	
	Work towards equal partnership with the Province and Universities	StudentsNS participates in 2015-18 MOU negotiations
		StudentsNS participates in Partnership Working Groups on International students, Access and affordability, and Tuition
StudentsNS and members participate in Student-Government Roundtables		
Host an advocacy week with MLAs	StudentsNS and members meet with 67% of MLAs	
Improve Representation	Host student assemblies	Two assemblies are held on each member campus
		Executives discuss what worked and what didn't
	Implement the Mend the Gap Campaign	Campaign running on all comprehensive member campuses
		Campaign is directed by a steering committee with member campus representatives
	Host a Leaderlab early in the fall semester	Participants respond positively in feedback questionnaires
StudentsNS receives participation from all comprehensive member campuses		
Support the NSCCSA	StudentsNS has met NSCCSA requests for assistance	
Strengthen policy and research	Complete position papers on priority themes	Accommodations for students with disabilities – Oct. 2013
		Off-campus housing – Oct. 2013
		Student financial assistance and tax credits – Oct. 2013
		Accessibility of the campus environment – Mar. 2014
		Campus health services – Mar. 2014
		Employment – Mar. 2014
		Graduate students – Mar. 2014
		Quality – March. 2014
		LGBTQ students – Oct. 2014
		Non-financial determinants of accessibility – Oct. 2014
On-campus housing – Oct. 2014		
University governance – Oct. 2014		

	Authors or contract out other reports	Pre-budget submission
		Review of student union policies and practices around alcohol
		Review of student union policies and practices around sexual assault prevention
	Support external studies related to StudentsNS	Thrive! review of campus food services
		Survey of campus sexual health needs and services
		Survey of campus mental health needs and services
Build research network	Volunteers mobilized to help complete research	
Create online library of student research related to StudentsNS values	Various good quality documents authored by students are made available	
Conduct impactful campaigns and communications	Provide consistent media commentary during the election	Party discourse around student and youth issues clearly impacted by StudentsNS talking points
	Circulate election questions to members for candidate debates or questionnaires	Members use StudentsNS questions for candidate debates and surveys
	Prepare website and hand-out indicating StudentsNS priorities and student-relevant election commitments	Students have access to good quality StudentsNS materials to inform their election participation
	Create an award program to recognize lead youth employers	Award program recognizes leaders in youth employment
	Create campaign to communicate importance and value of hiring youth	Campaign brings significant attention to NS youth employment crisis
	Host Summit on Youth in the NS Economy	Summit is strongly attended by youth, government, employers and other experts
		Participants respond positively in feedback questionnaires
		Event galvanizes action on youth employment crisis
	Host Student Wellness Conference on Mental Wellness	Participants respond positively in feedback questionnaires
		Event generates campus and provincial projects around mental wellness
	Implement campaign promoting sexual assault prevention	Campaign driven by steering committee comprised of member campus representatives
		Campaign reaches students across the Province
	Renew the Students Speak Out! Campaign	Website is renewed with fresh content from multiple StudentsNS campuses
Improve connectivity with member media	There are links to the StudentsNS website on all member websites	
Expand partnerships	Build partnerships around position papers	Accommodations for students with disabilities
		Accessibility of the campus Environment
		LGBTQ students
		Non-financial determinants of accessibility
	Build partnerships to move forward campaign projects	Partner organizations join steering committee of youth employer award program
Partner organizations support youth employment campaign		

		Partner organizations support Summit on Youth in the NS Economy
		Partner organizations collaborate with sexual assault prevention campaign
	Seek to partner with the NSSSA where possible	The NSSSA agrees to be identified as a partner on the StudentsNS website
Maintain strong internal governance and operations	Develop a definition of StudentsNS' <i>Quality</i> value	StudentsNS has a clear and workable definition of <i>Quality</i>
	Hire a part-time office manager	The office manager is hired
		Administrative efficiency is improved
	Prioritize the professional development of staff	Professional development moneys are spent
		Staff feel they are receiving the training that they need to improve their performance
	Build the StudentsNS Board Alumni network	StudentsNS has a database of former board members
	Develop a code of ethics for staff	A code of ethics is completed
	Prepare for possible staff transition, notably of the Executive Director	Internal operations ensure effective transfer of policies and knowledge
	Secure project funding as early as possible	Projects are not rushed because of late funding
	Maintain strong financial management	StudentsNS finishes the year with positive net assets
Maintain organizational transparency	All appropriate StudentsNS documentation is available on the website	
	Documentation is consistently made more transparent	