

Students Nova Scotia	Board of Directors	students 
	<i>Meeting Minutes</i>	

Meeting Name:	Board Meeting		
Meeting Date:	November 29, 2013		
Meeting Time:	2:30 PM, AST		
Venue:	The Hub Halifax	City:	Halifax, NS
Attendees			
Primary and Secondary Delegates:	Amy Brierley (Chair/StFXSU), Matthew Rios (Vice Chair/ASU), Benjamin Gunn-Doerge (StFXSU), Aaron Beale (DSU), Sagar Jha (DSU), Darcy Shea (ASU), Brennan Boudreau (CBUSU), Matthew Latimer (CBUSU/Treasurer).		
Other attendees:	Jonathan Williams (Executive Director), Jacob Voyer (Engagement and Communications Officer), Danielle Andres (Research Officer), Allison Sparling (Campaigns Coordinator).		
Absent:	ASTSU, Paul Rukidi (SMUSA), Jessica Compagnon (DASA), Gorba Bhandari (SMUSA, regrets), Patrick Visintini, , Jeremy Mott (Kingstec, NSCCSA).		
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 November 8th minutes

Were not circulated, moved to next meeting.

DISCUSSION & APPROVAL

5) Quality Position Paper Proposal

JW (ED): The reason why this was brought to the board was the proposal does not precisely reflect the discussion at the Board in the brainstorm. The general consensus we had as staff was, that we have a host of different aspects to the issue of quality. The current proposal emphasizes what is quality and has a particular focus on quality assurance. Later on we can get into the more micro-level specifics. It will look at the macro view of quality assurance. A later report should look at student success type mechanisms that exist at the university level to support students who are not succeeding and how to help them do better.

So we would do a report on quality assurance in general, and next summer we would do a report on access to post secondary and then next year as well we could do a student success report on how we help those students once they get into post secondary succeed and increase retention and so on.

DA (Research Officer): Jonathan has laid out why we are planning to do two papers; it is really important to look at what is happening at institutional level and government level, what quality is and how we are measuring it. It's worth examining this issue in more detail in order to do everything in a comprehensive way. Are there any questions?

AB (Chair): If I understand this correctly, the quality report would be first and then access to PSE and student success? The pedagogy look at things, would that fall under student success?

DA (Research Officer): I think it could fall under student success but you could most likely do a great paper just on that. I think the paper is expansive already and to talk about specific pedagogical methods properly you need more space to do it justice.

MR (Vice Chair/ASU): I just want to add that the paper really needs to be a transformative piece and by that I mean it needs to make people understand the structure of how university's function now and why they need to change.

SJ (DSU): I am excited to see where this will go; one suggestion is to evaluate how academic institutions view quality.

AB (DSU): I am worried that the paper might distract from larger issues like funding cuts or faculty budgets.

DA (Research Officer): I think quality assessments play into how universities do plan their financial budgets but if we could talk more about this at a later time, it would be very helpful to me.

AB (DSU): Sure.

6) Off-Campus Housing Report

JW (ED): I will release the paper in draft form onto the website this afternoon, but I'll give an overview briefly. We found that affordable housing is not something that students are officially eligible for, except for students with families, because students are viewed as transient – you would be viewed as a student for a brief period of time and then you are not a student anymore and your income is likely to increase. At the same time students need low cost housing and have significant impacts on affordable housing including making it more difficult for low-income families who are not in transient status, facing affordable housing challenges.

We looked at what is the money available that students need to get a place universities. In the paper there is a lot of information on how the housing works in Nova Scotia and who has jurisdiction on what. Our initial recommendation is that the province should work together to put together a student housing strategy that compliments the provincial housing strategy. Our primary emphasis in terms of ensuring affordable housing is available is creating mechanisms where institutions create the housing that is required. The emphasis of the report is on addressing supply challenges and the amount of affordable housing that is available.

BB (CBUSU): What is the overall goal for the report? Better funding?

JW (ED): We don't actually ask for an investment, the biggest recommendation is the expansion of residence or affordable housing provided by institutions. University should not have to charge 700 dollars for a dorm room when they are not trying to make a profit.

MR (Vice Chair/ASU): My major concern is focused around recommending universities build more residences. Often the case this puts schools into a poor fiscal state. I have concerns if this is a sustainable model that makes sense. Typically, if universities are spending significant amounts of money on residences, that's money that doesn't go to something else.

BB (CBUSU): We are having a hard time filling residences as it is.

B-G-D (StFXSU): A lot of students can't afford the housing costs associated with living on campus.

JW (ED): The universities would need to operate the residences outside of their operating budget, which technically they should be doing.

AB (Chair): When the draft is released we can have a little bit more discussion around those specific points.

B-G-D (StFXSU): Do we have a dollar amount for what affordable would be?

JW (ED): No, but we are trying to find a solution for students that would also work for low-income people.

B-G-D (StFXSU): Who is responsible for reading the draft over?

JW (ED): Matt Latimer.

7) Letter to Federal Government regarding affordable housing funding and strategy

AB (Chair): We wanted to get a feeling from the board of whether or not StudentsNS would want to be a signatory on the letter. The letter will be sent to Minister Kenny and Minister Bergen and it would be regarding an affordable housing strategy.

JW (ED): Partner groups that have signed on to be a part of the letter are, United Way, Halifax Region, Phoenix House. The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia has been the partner we have been working with in particular and have been involved in the housing report. The HRM is behind this letter as well.

AB (Chair): My thoughts on the letter are; consider having a sentence or two mentioning what the ramifications are for students between students and community members regarding affordable housing and homelessness. What are some thoughts on the board for this letter?

BB (CBUSU): I think the letter looks good. The one thing I would mention is if I brought it to my board they will ask why we should sign on to Halifax letter.

JW (ED): My understanding is that they will be approaching the union of Nova Scotia municipalities about issuing a similar letter for other areas of Nova Scotia.

B-G-D (StFXSU): Letter looks good and is a good idea.

DS (ASU): The letter is a good idea. I don't have a problem with the letter.

SJ (DSU): I think we should sign the letter.

AB (Chair): **Brennan Boudreau (CBUSU) moves and Darcy Shea (ASU) seconds the motion: Be it resolved that StudentsNS sign on to the HRM letter to the Federal Government.**

Motion passes by general consensus.

8) Possible discussion with Laura Burke regarding Mental Health Peer Support

JW (ED): DSU is dealing with a challenge on getting insurance for delivering peer support for a mental health coordinator.

SJ (DSU): Laura has been hosting a number of support sessions on mental health issues, and is trying to figure how we can get insurance for this. She wants to get peer support from other campuses as well.

JW (ED): Laura approached me about getting peer support from the other student unions in particular around developing demand for an insurer to cover this. What we are looking for is whether or not there is an interest for implementing peer support at other institutions.

SJ (DSU): To give more clarity about peer support is for people who are affected by mental health issues, and want support. Peer support helps by connecting those people with others who have had to go through similar issues.

B-G-D (StFXSU): Our peer support was cut and is it was considered something of a liability but would like it back on our campus, so we are on board with this.

AB (Chair): the general feeling is that we can pursue this and contact Laura Burke to speak with the Board, any objections? Hearing none I will move onto reports.

9) Reports of the Officers:

a) Chair – Amy Brierley (StFX)

I have been in contact with Jonathan pretty regularly discussing things that are going on in home office.

On November 26th the student assistance paper was released and we had a press release for that, which I signed off on.

I had a conversation with Jonathan and Matt on the housing report.

Matt Rios, Jonathan and I will be meeting with Minster Regan on December 11th. The sexual assault project is going quite well and the campaign is progressing well.

b) Vice-Chair – (ASU)

I had a conversation with home staff.

I also had a conversation over lunch with President Ivany of Acadia and President Wheeler from CBU and they are looking to endorse elements from our financial assistance paper.

Treasurer – absent

We have received all payments from our members. We now have some extra money.

10) Reports of the Staff:

a) Executive Director

- i. The student assistance report went out and we had Chronicle Herald coverage as well as CBC Radio coverage.
- ii. The working groups are going well, the tuition policy working group met last week they are trying to work out how do we come up with a scenario where there is funding for the universities that covers their cost growth but at the same time brings their cost growth

down. The universities are talking about a 3% cost growth potentially instead of the usual 4%.

- iii. It looks like government is going to make a decision on its funding escalator this month at the end of December and for us to get government to tie funding to the gross domestic product probably will not happen. It looks like government funding might be at inflation or lower than that.
- iv. Around faculty agreements, CBU is coming up against a potential strike, which is primarily related to faculty workloads. Workload costs a lot of money; it's a big money issue. It also looks like faculty negotiations could be tougher going forward as a result.
- v. International students working group has been basically defunct for 4 months now. People are not showing any real leadership in these meetings.
- vi. The Access and Affordability Working Group continues to push forward, currently they are working on, how do we measure whether underrepresented groups have access to post-secondary education so that we can set targets to create accountability for universities to meet those targets. We are trying to emphasize how many low-income students are attending right now, so what percentage of your student population going to school are receiving grants from the Canada Student Loan program is a fantastic way to measure how many low income students are going into your school. We are looking at measuring access to school for students with disabilities and dependents.
- vii. Sexual Assault project is progressing as well. I will provide more detail in the monthly report.

11) Reports of the Members:

a) ASU

- i. We are celebrating our win for TD Pump It Up tonight.
- ii. We are doing a week full of activities for our mental health initiative.
- iii. We are also handing out little treat bags and information on how to deal with exams. We have a senate meeting on Monday in which we are hoping to pass our fall reading week.

b) DSU

- i. Contract on renewal of Student Union Building.
- ii. We had a board of governors meeting and ended up having 30 students attending.
- iii. Lots to get done before break.

c) StFXSU

- i. President task force meeting has been going really well.
- ii. The Director of Student Life stepped down and as a result we are now pursuing hiring options, it has be tough to find a suitable replacement.
- iii. Donations for Movember campaign are up to \$12,000.
- iv. StFX signed on as a PSE sponsor for We Day.
- v. Conducted a survey of students on Health services on campus. We had over 600 people reply with feedback.

12) Other Business

ADJORNMENT