

2014-15 will be a critically important year for StudentsNS advocacy. In the 2014 Budget, the new Government of Nova Scotia decided to cut \$35 million from supports for youth in the economy as it eliminated the Graduate Retention Rebate. As well, the next University-Government Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed in 2014-15 and will presumably apply to the years 2015-2018. The MOU outlines the relationship between the Province and Nova Scotia's universities, basically indicating the terms under which the Province is agreeable to providing the universities with their annual operating grants. Policy decisions include funding amounts, funding conditions, fee regulations, etc. StudentsNS will be undertaking expansive efforts to pressure the Province to reinvest the funding it has cut to retain and attract young people to Nova Scotia and improve post-secondary education.

The StudentsNS 2014-15 Annual Plan is framed around five goals:

- Strengthen Student and Youth Leadership
- Improve Post-Secondary Education
- Support Student Wellness
- Promote Youth Economic Success
- Improve Organizational Operations

For each goal except the first, StudentsNS has identified a series of priority policy results. The Annual Report will record progress relative to all of these priority policies, as well as the activities that StudentsNS pursued to achieve each of these policy outcomes.

Under each goal, StudentsNS will also record its different activities and measures of whether these activities are pursued successfully. Of course, the organization's results are the most important indicator of success, but will not be reported in reference to a particular activity as they should result from a number of different activities. Therefore, these measures of success will focus more on how well activities are pursued.

In 2014-15, StudentsNS will pursue six crosscutting strategies:

- Conduct Effective Government Relations
- Improve Representation
- Strengthen Policy and Research
- Conduct Impactful Campaigns and Communications
- Expand Partnerships
- Maintain Strong Governance and Operations

StudentsNS has shifted away from organizing its activities based on these strategies to consider them together based on goals, to support the view that StudentsNS' engagement, research and government relations must be integrated and coordinated towards achieving outcomes for the organization to be successful.

## 1) Strengthen Student and Youth Leadership

Activities	Measures of Success
Student assemblies	Two assemblies are held on each member campus
	More than 250 total participants
	Documented reports are prepared on the discussions and attendance at each student assembly, which are made available to the relevant campuses' board representatives, StudentsNS staff and the public through StudentsNS' website
	StudentsNS communications materials are made available at each student assembly
	Student assembly input is integrated into StudentsNS research reports
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
Mend the Gap Campaign	Campaign active on most member campuses
	Campaign is directed by a steering committee that reports feeling ownership over the project
	StudentsNS makes progress towards parity in gender representation at the Board
	Funding secured for ongoing activities supporting the campaign's mission
	Campaign integrates research and engagement activities
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
Pre-Budget Submission	Board Members feel ownership over Pre-Budget Submission content
	The Pre-Budget Submission is delivered to the Minister of Finance with sufficient notice before the Budget
	StudentsNS participates in a pre-budget consultation with the Minister of Finance
Advocacy Week with MLAs	Board members lead meetings with MLAs
	Board members report feeling empowered and prepared to participate in meetings effectively
	Meetings are held with multiple MLAs from each party
Independent Member Meetings with MLAs	Board members lead meetings with MLAs
	Most members organize a meeting with at least one MLA
Improve campus connectivity and outreach	StudentsNS provides communication materials to members upon request, including in orientation packages
	Campaigns and activities are steered, supported and/or implemented by campus organization representatives
	StudentsNS promotes activities undertaken by campus organizations relating to its mandate and/or annual plan priorities
	StudentsNS presents at least once to each member council
	Member association websites provide accessible links to <a href="http://www.studentsns.ca">www.studentsns.ca</a>
	Newsletter issued regularly, subject to newly introduced legal constraints

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
	StudentsNS regularly promotes member campus activities through social media
	Member associations regularly push StudentsNS content on social media
	StudentsNS exceeds 1000 likes on Facebook
	StudentsNS exceeds 2000 followers on Twitter
Pilot advocacy training day at StFX and SMU, and other campuses upon request	More than 15 attendees at each event
	Training days are designed and implemented in partnership with campus representatives and volunteers
	Participants report positively on learning and the general experience in feedback questionnaires
	Staff and volunteers prepare a report on the event and how/whether trainings could be implemented successfully in the future
	A follow-up survey with participants at the end of the year indicates that they use the training
Publish student research online	At least five good quality documents authored by students and related to StudentsNS' mandate and goals are available at <a href="http://www.studentsns.ca">www.studentsns.ca</a>
Maintain and enhance media relations	Reach in formal media exceeds any prior year
	Media monitoring and impact reports are issued to the Board each month
	StudentsNS is the primary provincial media contact for student perspectives
Administer Independent Review of Student Union Governance	Participating student associations report that the review is a helpful document for improving how their organizations operate
	Review is considered a valuable resource in understanding governance and accountability structures within participating student associations
	Project findings are steered by active advisory committee
	Steering committee reports feeling ownership over the project
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
	Student associations do not view the review as StudentsNS directing student associations on how they should be governed
Provincial Progress Indicators relative to StudentsNS values and/or goals	Indicators provide a balanced and evidence-based understanding of the circumstances of students in Nova Scotia
	Indicators receive a significant number of page views and feed traffic into StudentsNS research (factsheets and reports) and campaigns
Develop youth advocate award	Award program designed with clear criteria, selection process and governance
	Project is supported by partner organizations
Strengthen the student movement	StudentsNS has met NSCCSA requests for assistance
	StudentsNS is engaged with any Dalhousie Student Union Advocacy Review

## 2) Improve Post-Secondary Education

### Priority Policy Outcomes

- Students are included as a full partner in the University-Government Memorandum of Understanding Negotiations.
- The Province develops a comprehensive strategy to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to post-secondary education.
- The Province develops an international education strategy that prioritizes language skills development, funding for international student services and strengthened quality assurance.
- The Province improves university accountability and stability, notably by improving the University Funding Distribution Formula and requiring standardized financial reporting.
- The Province increases university operating grants at the rate of nominal GDP growth (estimated at 4.1% in 2015 and 4.7% in 2016 and 2017).
- The Province introduces regulations around ancillary fees requiring approval by the student body, delineating what goods and services may be funded through ancillary fees and requiring periodic review or pre-defined term limits.
- The Province invests to improve the Nova Scotia Student Assistance Program by making more funding available to students, converting all loans to grants and improving its appeals mechanisms.
- The Province regulates tuition fees for all students, freezing domestic tuition at 0% growth and international student tuition at the rate of inflation.
- The Province reinvests the value of the Graduate Retention Rebate, Tuition and Education Tax Credit and Student Loan Interest Tax Credit to other supports for students and youth.

Activities	Measures of Success
Memorandum of Understanding negotiations	Students participate significantly in the MOU consultation process
	StudentsNS positions on the MOU are articulated clearly in off-campus and student media
	StudentsNS representatives feel confident and prepared to participate in MOU negotiations
Student-Government Roundtables	Board members report feeling confident and prepared to lead discussions
	Representatives from a majority of member campuses attend each roundtable
Position Paper on Nova Scotia Community College Student Fees and Funding	Report is supported broadly by NSCC student associations
	Draft report released by September 2014
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
Position Paper on Social Determinants of Access to Post-Secondary Education	Partners support the report
	Draft report released publicly by January 2015
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Graduate Students	Partners support the report
	Elements completed by the end of 2014
	Report completed mostly by active graduate students
	StudentsNS undertakes engagement activities to support the report's activities
Position Paper on Student Success and Retention	Partners support the report
	Draft report released publicly by May 2015
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Post-Secondary Institution Spending and Governance	Partners support the report
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Post-Secondary Campus Space	Partners support the report
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Post-Secondary Teaching and Learning	Partners support the report
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Mature Students	Partners support the report
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Support Initiative on preventing violence against Indigenous women and supporting participation in post-secondary education	Partners view StudentsNS as an important contributor to this initiative
Access and Affordability Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy
International Students Policy Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy
Quality Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy
Tuition Policy Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy

### 3) Support Student Wellness and Inclusiveness

#### Priority Policy Outcomes

- All post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia formally address accommodations and the rights of students with disabilities within their anti-discrimination policy, notably providing a formal
- Appeals process for students who are denied accommodations
- Campus health facilities consider experience in multicultural environments when hiring counselors.
- Campus housing services integrate off-campus and on-campus services and are evaluated by the MPHEC.
- Service Nova Scotia requires that landlords file an explanation when they increase rent beyond the rate of inflation and keeps public records of rental properties' histories.
- The Province creates a special grant for post-secondary institutions to improve Disability Services systems or frameworks
- The Province covers the full up-front cost of psycho-educational assessments
- The Province provides international students with MSI coverage immediately when they begin their studies.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
Mental Health Campaign	Partners support the campaign
	Campaign implemented in the Winter 2015 semester
	Campaign is directed by a steering committee that reports feeling ownership over the project
	External funding secured to support the campaign
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
Position Paper on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	Partners support the report
	Final Report released by October 2014
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Campus Health Services	Partners support the report
	Draft report released publicly by January 2015
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations
Position Paper on Discrimination, Human Rights and Inclusiveness	Partners support the report
	Draft report released publicly by May 2015
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations

Activities	Measures of success
Maintain and enhance campaign on sexual assault prevention and consent	Bringing in the Bystander Training is delivered on at least three post-secondary campuses
	There is a structure to support the adaptation and evaluation of the Bringing in the Bystander Training
	The More than Yes Campaign continues to be implemented on and off post-secondary campuses
	StudentsNS' partnerships on this project are strengthened
Host Student Wellness Conference	Participants respond positively in feedback questionnaires
	Project is directed by a steering committee that reports feeling ownership over the project
	Event brings together leaders from most student associations, most post-secondary institutions' student services departments, district health authorities and the Department of Health and Wellness
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
Support survey of campus mental health needs and services	Funding is secured to conduct a survey in 2015-16 at the latest
	StudentsNS is a core partner in the development and implementation of the survey

## 4) Promote Youth Economic Success

### Priority Policy Outcomes

- Post-secondary disability services should better support students with disabilities' transition into the workforce.
- The Province and post-secondary institutions ensure that all students participating in unpaid experiential learning experiences through Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions are eligible for student assistance.
- The Province and post-secondary institutions support international student immigration by improving career and immigration counseling on and off-campus, supporting cooperative education and educating Nova Scotia employers about the importance of hiring international students, graduates and other immigrants.
- The Province continues to tie the Minimum Wage to the Low-Income Cut-Off.
- The Province reinvests the value of the Graduate Retention Rebate, Tuition and Education Tax Credit and Student Loan Interest Tax Credit to other supports for students and youth.
- The Province should attach specific provisions for the hiring of students, youth and recent graduates to all investments and/or loans made with private businesses.
- The Province should ensure all new or expanded youth hiring incentive programs ensure new incremental youth job creation.
- The Province should immediately develop and implement a comprehensive youth attraction and retention strategy, supported by a comprehensive qualitative study of interprovincial migrants
- The Province should create a single online portal for youth seeking government-funded services.
- The Province should index wages to inflation for those employed through its wage subsidy programs relative to the years each program was introduced.
- The Province should provide additional funding to post-secondary institutions to expand student career and employment-related services and programs.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
Implement Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign	Campaign is directed by a steering committee that reports feeling ownership over the project
	Campaign successfully follows planning calendar
	Campaign engages large numbers of students
	Campaign attracts significant media attention
	Campaign is supported by partners
Employment Position Paper	Partners support the report
	Final Report released by October 2014
	Report reinforces the Farewell to Nova Scotia campaign

Activities	Measures of Success
Create an award program to recognize lead youth employers	Award program generates significant media attention
	At least fifteen employers are nominated or apply for the award
	Project steering committee includes Member of the Board of Directors and partner organization representatives
	Partners commit to provide sustainable funding for the project
	All deliverables identified in any proposal to an external funder are fulfilled
Participate at the Workforce of the Future Table	Workforce of the Future Table generates concrete projects to support youth attraction and retention
	StudentsNS contributes to the design of concrete initiatives to support youth attraction and retention
Engage with the One Nova Scotia Coalition	StudentsNS receives media attention related to the One Nova Scotia Coalition

## 5) Improve Internal Performance

Activities	Measures of Success
Improve position paper impact	Develop process for evaluating position paper impact as they expire
	Implement engagement activities at the release of every position paper
	Release Executive Summaries and Summaries of Recommendations for each new position paper and determine which summary attracts more readers
	Summaries of Recommendations are available for all published position papers
Performance measurement through Board and steering committee surveys	Survey templates created for Board and Steering Committee Members
	Surveys issued to the Board of Directors at the midway and end points of the year
	Surveys issued to steering committees at the close of the year
	Board surveys show improvement between the mid- and end-points of the year
	Board of Directors survey feedback is reflected in the annual report
Explore the development of a student survey	StudentsNS has determined the likely logistical requirements (costs, time, etc.) and objectives of a student survey to be implemented in 2015-16
	The Board of Directors provides a recommendation to the 2015-16 Board as to whether it is advisable to pursue a student survey
Improve Board of Directors training	Transition processes are strengthened for Board Officers
	Board of Directors approves a new orientation process for Board Members the beginning of the 2015-16 fiscal year
	Training developed for the Board of Directors on inclusiveness
	The Board of Directors reports feeling ownership over the new training processes
Maintain and enhance governance and transparency	All appropriate documentation is available on the website in a timely fashion
	Documentation is consistently made more transparent
	The Executive Director delivers monthly reports to the Board of Directors within three days of the turn of the month
	Internal governance policies are respected
	Board Members report that organizational governance improved at year-end
StudentsNS Board Alumni network	The database of former Board members and staff is kept up to date
	Former Board members and staff are invited to an alumni event
Explore advisory committees for equity-seeking groups	A proposal is prepared for the Board of Directors on how best to create caucuses for particular groups within the student population, with a special focus on students from communities underrepresented in post-secondary education

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
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
Prepare for staff transition	StudentsNS filing is consistent, intuitive and relatively easy to navigate
	Staff record all meeting notes in Customer Relationship Management software
	Staff use Zotero to track research materials
Review Staff Performance	The Board of Directors completes a Performance Review of the Executive Director
	The Executive Director undertakes a Performance Review process with all staff either on an annual or bi-annual basis
Improve management of externally funded projects	Proposals are submitted early so that projects are not rushed due to late funding
	Funding agreements are properly filed and respected
	Projects are completed and submitted on time
	StudentsNS collects administrative fees to support project implementation
Strengthen financial management	Year ends with positive net assets
	The VP Administration issues mid-year report to the Board on spending to date relative to the budget, including any significant expenditures not clearly outlined in the Budget
	The VP Administration verifies all monthly bank and credit card statements
	The VP Administration review at least three firms and delivers a report to the Board of Directors prior to the Annual General Meeting recommending a firm to complete the annual Financial Report for 2015-16.