

## October Quarterly Report

Prepared by Jonathan Williams, StudentsNS Executive Director  
Approved by the Board of Directors, October 24, 2014

We are midway through the 2014-15 year. The Annual Plan is highly ambitious, but we have been making progress in a number of areas.

At this point, we have not achieved any of our policy outcomes, which is unsurprising as most decisions will be made around the MOU and the budget, beginning with the funding stability mechanism decision in December and then the completion of the MOU and the budget as late as April. However, we have suffered a major setback, being excluded from the universities-government MOU negotiations for the first time since the 2005 MOU.

In terms of our activities, many are proceeding according to plan, while we have some concerns about certain activities and major concerns about a handful focused on student engagement directly. Areas in need of particular focus include the Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign, student assemblies, and pilot advocacy training days at StFX and SMU.

We have split the update into a first section on our policy outcomes, and then a second section on our activities. For each policy outcome, we identify our activities to date and, in some cases, a prognosis on the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes this year.

### Code:

- No particular concerns about fulfilling deliverables for the activity, proceeding according to plan.
- Requires additional attention, some concerns about meeting deliverables.
- Requires significant additional attention, significant concerns about meeting deliverables or even having circumstances worsen.

## 1. POLICY OUTCOMES

The annual plan identifies priority policy outcomes in three areas:

1. Improve Post-Secondary Education
2. Support Student Wellness and Inclusiveness
3. Promote Youth Economic Success

### 1.1 Improve Post-Secondary Education

Priority Policy Outcomes	Activities
Students are included as a full partner in the University-Government Memorandum of Understanding Negotiations.	Unsuccessful communications with government. Strong condemnation of the government in the media for about-face on pre-election commitment to student engagement.
The Province develops an international education strategy that prioritizes language skills development, funding for international student services and strengthened quality assurance.	Continued participation in international students working group.
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).	Continued media-relations, participation in tuition policy review working group. Government seems to have very little appetite to implement this recommendation.
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.	Major priority in the Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign. Significant media coverage.
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.	Major priority in the Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign. Submitted our report on Student Financial Assistance to the provincial tax review and have sent a follow-up email to clarify whether it is being considered with particular reference to the tax credits still in place (i.e. not the GRR).
The Province develops a comprehensive strategy to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to post-secondary education.	Continued participation in Access and Affordability Working Group, which may be making slow progress. Initial work on Access position paper. There may be an opening for this in the context of the Province's Education Review and the Ivany Report recommendation to increase PSE participation.
The Province improves university accountability and stability, notably by improving the University Funding Distribution Formula and requiring standardized financial reporting.	Have asked the government to provide us an opportunity to give feedback on any proposed new funding formula before they finalize it. This seems like an area where gains are very possible.
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.	Major release in September based on latest data from the MPHEC. Major priority in Student-Government Roundtable and the Tuition Policy Review Working Group. This seems like an area where gains are very possible.
The Province regulates tuition fees for all students, freezing domestic tuition at 0% growth and international student tuition at the rate of inflation.	Major priority in the Tuition Policy Review Working Group and the proposed march. Seems very unlikely to be implemented, in fact there is a significant risk of tuition deregulation and/or reset in the context of the MOU.

## 1.2 Support Student Wellness and Inclusiveness

Priority Policy Outcomes	Activities
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	Report almost complete and ready for release.
Campus housing services integrate off-campus and on-campus services and are evaluated by the MPHEC.	Delivered feedback to this effect to review of MPHEC. Continued messaging that universities must handle housing better.
The Province creates a special grant for post-secondary institutions to improve Disability Services systems or frameworks	Report almost complete and ready for release.
The Province provides international students with MSI coverage immediately when they begin their studies.	Major priority in student-government roundtable. Featured prominently in Farewell to NS Campaign.
Campus health facilities consider experience in multicultural environments when hiring counselors.	Some indications of progress on this file at a number of institutions. Continued work on health services report. Working with a psychiatrist interested in working at NS universities.
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.	Held a meeting with civil servants responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act and have requested a follow-up meeting.
The Province covers the full up-front cost of psycho-educational assessments	Report almost complete and ready for release.

## 1.3 Promote Youth Economic Success

Priority Policy Outcomes	Activities
Post-secondary disability services should better support students with disabilities' transition into the workforce.	Report almost complete and ready for release.
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.	Report on employment released supporting these recommendations. Continued participation in international students working group.
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.	Major priority in the Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign. Submitted our report on Student Financial Assistance to the provincial tax review and have sent a follow-up email to clarify whether it is being considered with particular reference to the tax credits still in place (i.e. not the GRR).
The Province should ensure all new or expanded youth hiring incentive programs ensure new incremental youth job creation.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
The Province should create a single online portal for youth seeking government-funded services.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
The Province should provide additional funding to post-	Report released, with support of media

secondary institutions to expand student career and employment-related services and programs.	appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
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.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
The Province continues to tie the Minimum Wage to the Low-Income Cut-Off.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign. Continue to request a seat on the Minimum Wage Review Committee.
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.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
The Province should immediately develop and implement a comprehensive youth attraction and retention strategy, supported by a comprehensive qualitative study of interprovincial migrants	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.
The Province should index wages to inflation for those employed through its wage subsidy programs relative to the years each program was introduced.	Report released, with support of media appearances and the Farewell Campaign.

## 2. ACTIVITIES

The annual plan identifies three general priorities with related activities:

1. Strengthen Student and Youth Leadership
2. Improve Post-Secondary Education
3. Support Student Wellness and Inclusiveness
4. Promote Youth Economic Success
5. Improve Internal Performance

### 2.1 Strengthen Student and Youth Leadership

Activities	Measures of Success	October Progress
Student assemblies	Two assemblies are held on each member campus	No student assemblies to date, except for event at SMU that could definitely qualify. Funding has not been confirmed from D250.
	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	No funding secured as of yet for 2014-15. Event at Dalhousie University for October 16. Steering Committee active. Research project completed and awaiting release.
	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	Will not initiate work until December-January.
	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	No work initiated yet.
	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	No meetings to date. StudentsNS and StFXSU did host an MLA forum at StFX.
	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	Provided orientation materials to all interested student unions.
	Campaigns and activities are steered, supported and/or implemented by campus organization representatives	Steering committees are active on the Farewell campaign, Mend the Gap, and the SU Governance Review.
	StudentsNS promotes activities undertaken by campus organizations relating to its mandate and/or annual plan priorities	Have shared some events on Facebook as we become aware of them. More opportunity if we are informed of events.
	StudentsNS presents at least once to each member council	Presentation to date at StFX. Initial steps taken to present at the DSU.
	Member association websites provide accessible links to <a href="http://www.studentsns.ca">www.studentsns.ca</a>	ASU, StFX, SMUSA need to update sites. Most sites offer a link but often the links are very hidden. SMUSA is an exception.
	Newsletter issued regularly, subject to newly introduced legal constraints	Have not issued newsletter. Not clear that it's worthwhile considering legal constraints.
	StudentsNS regularly promotes member campus activities through social media	Have shared some events on Facebook as we become aware of them. More opportunity if we are aware of events.
	Member associations regularly push StudentsNS content on social media	The DSU has actively promoted StudentsNS activities, as well as SMUSA, StFXSU and the ASU to a lesser degree.
	StudentsNS exceeds 1000 likes on Facebook	Progress: 212 additional likes since September 16, increasing our total to 500.
	StudentsNS exceeds 2000 followers on Twitter	Currently have 1609 followers on twitter, had an increase of 100 in the month of October.
Pilot advocacy training day at StFX and SMU, and other campuses upon request	More than 15 attendees at each event	No progress to date.
	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	At least five good quality documents	Have taken steps to develop a

research online	authored by students and related to StudentsNS' mandate and goals are available at <a href="http://www.studentsns.ca">www.studentsns.ca</a>	strategy for requesting student work. In contact with students from StFX about a project on alcohol.
Maintain and enhance media relations	Reach in formal media exceeds any prior year	Significant media coverage notably in print and on the radio. Have not completed monthly media monitoring and impact reports, will shift these to quarterly.
	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	Project is being completed. Consultant is hired and active under the supervision of the advisory committee, completing campus interviews this month.
	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	Initial work has begun. Should have indicators prepared for the Board by the November board meeting.
	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	No progress to date.
	Project is supported by partner organizations	
Strengthen the student movement	StudentsNS has met NSCCSA requests for assistance	Preparing to meet with the NSCCSAs. Are almost prepared to release a draft of the NSCC report.
	StudentsNS is engaged with any Dalhousie Student Union Advocacy Review	Have been following the development of the review committee but have not met with them to date.

## 2.2 Improve Post-Secondary Education

Activities	Measures of Success	October Progress
Memorandum of Understanding negotiations	Students participate significantly in the MOU consultation process	StudentsNS has been excluded from the MOU negotiations in an about-face by government relative to election commitments.
	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	Roundtable in September included representatives from most StudentsNS member campuses.
	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 will be released before the end of October.
	Draft report released by September 2014	
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on Social Determinants of Access to Post-Secondary Education	Partners support the report	Some work has begun on the report. Staff is considering shifting resources to prioritize completing this report and then the Health Services report, but both roughly on time.
	Draft report released publicly by January 2015	
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on Graduate Students	Partners support the report	One draft has been received on one small report. Second report in progress.
	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	Work has not begun yet.
	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	Work has not begun yet.
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on Post-Secondary Campus Space	Partners support the report	Have submitted an application for funds to hire a staff member to conduct campus accessibility audits.
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on Post-Secondary Teaching and Learning	Partners support the report	Work has not begun yet.
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on	Partners support the report	Work has not begun yet.

Mature Students	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	Continue to participate in steering committee on this project. Contributed \$500 towards emergency fund for Aboriginal women.
Access and Affordability Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy	Continue to participate in the working group and appear to be making progress on creating indicators of access to PSE by members of identified underrepresented groups.
International Students Policy Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy	Continue to participate, including in follow-up meeting regarding tenant rights issues. Little material progress.
Quality Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy	Working group has basically wrapped up. Modest conclusions: universities should provide data to government re: secondary outcomes (graduation rates, etc.), quality assurance practices, and review the possibility of implementing learning outcomes.
Tuition Policy Working Group	Working group recommendations are consistent with StudentsNS policy	Continued participation. Working group to indicate options for tuition, ancillary fees and the NS University Student Bursary with pros and cons for decision by government/the Partnership.

## 2.3 Support Student Wellness and Inclusiveness

Activities	Measures of Success	October Progress
Mental Health Campaign	Partners support the campaign	Submitted unsuccessful application for funding to Bell Let's Talk. Looking at alternative funding sources or approaches to meet this deliverable, including in cooperation with Mental Health Society at Acadia.
	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 to be released before the end of October. Have applied for funding to hire a student to complete a campaign to support the report's recommendations.
	Final Report released by October 2014	
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Position Paper on Campus Health Services	Partners support the report	Work has been initiated. Hired Laura Burke from the DSU to prepare section on peer support. May shift resources to prioritize completing this report or the
	Draft report released publicly by January 2015	
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	

		access report more quickly.
Position Paper on Discrimination, Human Rights and Inclusiveness	Partners support the report	Work has not begun yet.
	Draft report released publicly by May 2015	
	Engagement activities support the report's recommendations	
Maintain and enhance campaign on sexual assault prevention and consent	Bringing in the Bystander Training is delivered on at least three post-secondary campuses	Contributed to bringing University of New Hampshire trainers to StFX to train people from across the Province in July. Have a network willing to support further development of the training. Continue to implement the More than Yes Campaign through posters, condoms, online activities, media. Bringing in the Bystander Training delivered at StFX and SMU to date.
	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	Have heard various commitments from different parties in government towards implementing this. No details yet.
	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	Funding proposal to Bell Let's Talk rejected. No further steps taken as of yet.
	StudentsNS is a core partner in the development and implementation of the survey	

## 2.4 Promote Youth Economic Success

Activities	Measures of Success	October Progress
Implement Farewell to Nova Scotia Campaign	Campaign is directed by a steering committee that reports feeling ownership over the project	Campaign has been launched with a website that has drawn significant attention. Facebook ads have drawn significant attention. Work continues to have a march on November 6. Negligible student engagement except online. Some agreement on cooperation with the NSGEU, namely help in promoting the march.
	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	Report released in September. Significant media coverage (CBC radio, Chronicle Herald, AllNovaScotia). Supported by campaign. Partners supporting the
	Final Report released by October 2014	
	Report reinforces the Farewell to Nova Scotia campaign	

		report (Fusion HFX), but not openly.
Create an award program to recognize lead youth employers	Award program generates significant media attention	Secured \$25,000 to implement the award program. Initiated the design of the branding, website, etc. with Trampoline. Still determining timeline for implementation based on a possible event when the winners could be announced. Also still determining possible funding sources for future years, but there has been interest from groups outside government.
	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	Continue to contribute to the Table, but it has not been very active or generated concrete initiatives to date. We are trying to tie the Employer Award to the Table to create some momentum for concrete deliverables.
	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	Have referenced the OneNS report consistently in the media. StudentsNS Executive Director invited to contribute to advisory committee on youth employment.
	StudentsNS seizes on mechanisms to provide input into the Coalition's work	

## 2.5 Improve Internal Performance

Activities	Measures of Success	October Progress
Improve position paper impact	Develop process for evaluating position paper impact as they expire	Have implemented engagement activities with the Employment report, and delivered an executive summary and summary of recommendations. Have developed summaries of recommendations that are available on our website for all previous position papers as well.
	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	Need to implement survey in the next two weeks.
	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	Work has not begun yet.
	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	Work has not begun yet.
	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	Have shifted to quarterly reports. Documentation is available on the website but we have needed to play catch up on board minutes and the financial statements (difficulties in ensuring accuracy of the financial statements). Will be caught up on minutes by the end of the month.
	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	Hosted an alumni event in August with only limited success. May try again in December when hopefully more alumni are around for the Christmas holidays.
	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	Some progress, should have something for the Board soon.
Prioritize the professional development of staff	Professional development moneys are spent	Well on our way to spending professional development moneys.
	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	Significant improvement in usage of CRM software with shift to Highrise.
	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	Work has not begun yet on the Executive Director's Performance Review. Completed performance reviews with all staff except one in 2014-15.
	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	Difficulty in applying for funding as a result of uncertain status of D250 Trust. Difficulty on the government side in processing funding for Youth Employer Award significantly delayed project roll-out. Things would have been better if we had wrapped up reporting on 2013-14 projects and submitted new
	Funding agreements are properly filed and respected	
	Projects are completed and submitted on time	
	StudentsNS collects administrative fees to support project implementation	

		proposals in May.
Strengthen financial management	Year ends with positive net assets	Have reviewed monthly statements. VP Administration to deliver quarterly financial updates. Budgeted to complete the year 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.	
	At year end, Board Members feel confident in StudentsNS' financial management	

