

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2021

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*St. Thomas University  
Students' Union*

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Three years ago, it was my great pleasure to be a part of the 2015-2016 Students' Representative Council (SRC) which worked on and approved the STUSU's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Over the past few years, I have seen the STUSU grow and change exponentially from the organization it was when I first arrived at St. Thomas. Therefore, it was exciting to arrive this year with the 2018-2019 SRC in order to begin the process of developing a new strategic plan for the STUSU. As many student organizations do, the STUSU often struggles with institutional memory and high turnover rates of Executives, members of the SRC, and employees. Strategic planning is aimed at addressing and bridging the gaps between these inherent difficulties.

While it is equally necessary for the STUSU to remain responsive to the immediate needs of our members, we recognize that our members experience many barriers and challenges which often take many years in order to fully address and dismantle. As a result, long-term planning within the STUSU is the only way to truly make any significant progress on any goals relating to alleviating the systemic and various barriers within the postsecondary sector and our community. The STUSU has a responsibility to improve the St. Thomas student experience for today's students and tomorrow's. Because of this, it is critical that the STUSU be an organization which thinks strategically, measures its process and effectiveness, and consistently engages in self-reflection to allow for continual improvement. Through this process, all involved in the STUSU are able to have a hand in developing and improving the organization for years to come.

This Strategic Plan sets out the STUSU's overarching institutional objectives for the next three years. The plan is organized into four organizational pillars, each of which identifies areas of focus. Both the pillars and focus areas outlined in this plan were developed through collaboration with the 2018-2019 SRC and incorporating the feedback of students. It is my recommendation that future Executive teams and SRCs keep this plan close for the next three years and regularly track process on its objectives.

The four pillars which were identified during this year's strategic planning process are the following: Dedicated Advocacy, Enhancement of the Student Experience, Supporting Students Equity, and Diversity and Inclusion.



**Brianna Workman**

# ABOUT THE STUSU

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## Mission

“The Students’ Union is a democratically elected body, whose mission is to effectively represent and provide services to the students of St. Thomas University and to advocate the position of the organization before the University’s administration, municipal government, provincial ministries and federal departments. The Students’ Union strives to enhance the life and experience of students with a positive educational, social and cultural environment while attending St. Thomas University.”

STUSU Constitution, Title III, Section I

## Vision

That the STUSU will help achieve a university community and experience that is accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality for all students through a positive educational and social environment.

## Values

- The STUSU will dedicate itself to improving the experiences of students at St. Thomas University and addressing their issues and concerns
- The STUSU will remain open, transparent and practice good governance
- The STUSU will be member driven, by ensuring that the STUSU is accessible to all students, providing each of them with opportunities to engage with the organization

# PLANNING PROCESS

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## Strategic Plan

Every third year, during the final year of the strategic plan, the SRC must embark on a new strategic planning process to compile another three-year plan. The STUSU's Strategic Plan is an overarching document that seeks to put tangible goals and metrics in place for how the STUSU will move toward achieving its mission, vision and long-term goals as an organization. The STUSU's mission, vision and values should remain constant in each plan, unless it is the will of the membership to alter them during the three-year review.

## Annual Priorities Document

The Strategic Plan will not succeed if it is not integral to the daily activities of the STUSU. On an annual basis, as per Chapter IV, Section 1, subsection (i) of the By-Laws, the President of the Students' Union must, "present a report on the behalf of the SEC within one month of assuming office, detailing major objectives and initiatives planned for the coming year." While this document will outline more specific annual goals and projects, it should be rooted broadly in the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Annual Priorities Document is developed by the Students' Executive Council (SEC) throughout their first month in office. The Annual Priorities Document is circulated to the SRC and the membership as a whole for further discussion and feedback on the objectives for that year.

## Progress Reports

On a regular basis, the President is responsible for delivering written and oral reports to the SRC on the progress that has been made toward the Annual Priorities Document and Strategic Plan.

## Year-In-Review

At the end of each year, the current Strategic Plan and Annual Priorities Document should be reviewed to assess overall progress in a formal written or oral report to the SRC at one of the final regularly constituted meetings of the academic year.

# PILLAR #1: DEDICATED ADVOCACY

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Advocacy refers to the process by which the STUSU furthers its internal and external policy positions and strategies by choosing to engage with various decision makers such as various levels of government and the university administration. Through these various advocacy methods, the STUSU brings forward student issues and recommendations for improvements to all levels of student life. The STUSU's internal advocacy often occurs through regular meetings with senior administration and through representation on the university's two main governing bodies - Senate and the Board of Governors. External advocacy is largely accomplished through membership with the New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) and Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). Regardless of internal or external advocacy, all of the STUSU's policy positions are rooted in extensive research and stem from student experiences. All of STUSU's advocacy endeavours will remain strictly non-partisan and seek to evoke change through strong consensus building among key stakeholders.

## Core Objectives

- The STUSU will advocate on issues specific to St. Thomas students at the institutional level - by working with members of the senior administration, student services staff and through representation on the University's Senate and Board of Governors.
- The STUSU will advocate at the provincial level with the New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) to communicate its policy positions to all relevant players within the New Brunswick postsecondary education sector.
- The STUSU will advocate at the federal level with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) to communicate its policy positions to all parliamentarians and other relevant federal stakeholders.

# PILLAR #2: ENHANCEMENT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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Each of the STUSU's everyday activities are geared towards enhancing the educational, social and cultural environment at St. Thomas University. This includes working towards enhancing the student experience in diverse and meaningful ways. Additionally, this includes ensuring that the STUSU itself is an open, transparent and accessible conduit for enhancing student life. This type of internal organization is necessary in order to allow the STUSU to then create a community which regularly enhances the St. Thomas student experience.

## Core Objectives

- The STUSU shall ensure its operations are accessible, accountable and transparent to St. Thomas students to ensure that the organization can fully understand and meet the needs of its membership.
- The STUSU will enhance the student experience through a commitment to sustainability within the Students' Union and throughout the St. Thomas community.
- The STUSU will strive to connect students with both the campus and Fredericton community through events, opportunities to get involved, and strategic partnerships.
- The STUSU will continue to enhance campus life by supporting other student-led initiatives such as Clubs and Societies, conferences, events, and more.
- The STUSU will work to create a lively and vibrant student experience through innovative and engaging programming, events, opportunities and more.

# PILLAR #3: SUPPORTING STUDENTS

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The STUSU's membership faces a myriad of barriers which impact their experience as students. As a result, the STUSU has an inherent responsibility to work to address these systemic barriers. By working to address these barriers, the STUSU can ensure students are better supported and better able to thrive, learn, and grow throughout their educational experience. The core objectives below are specifically outlined because they emerged as some of the most common challenges St. Thomas students face during the development of this plan. However, the STUSU recognizes that the areas requiring student support of those within the St. Thomas community are vast, and thus, this pillar should remain flexible to address this variety.

## Core Objectives

- The STUSU will work towards dismantling barriers - both financial and non-financial - to accessing and thriving in postsecondary education.
- The STUSU will work to ensure that St. Thomas University is a safe and supportive community and space for all students.
- The STUSU will work towards improving the quality of life of St. Thomas students by supporting the mental and physical wellness of students.
- The STUSU will work towards making the St. Thomas University campus fully accessible by advocating for the elimination of any physical, social, and academic barriers.

# PILLAR #4: EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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In recent years, the STUSU has made considerable strides towards becoming a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization which incorporates this lens into all work the Students' Union undertakes. However, there is much more to be done. The STUSU represents an extremely diverse membership and as a result, has a responsibility to ensure that the Students' Union equitably represents and is accessible to members of various marginalized communities. Creating a more inclusive Students' Union will ultimately make the STUSU a better and stronger organization.

## Core Objectives

- The STUSU will work to ensure proper representation of underrepresented groups within the Students' Union itself in order to adequately represent these communities of students and strengthen the work the STUSU undertakes on behalf of these students.
- The STUSU will consistently strive to take an intersectional approach to all activities - particularly policy and advocacy work - which will impact students from underrepresented groups within the St. Thomas community.
- The STUSU will remain committed to undertaking thorough consultation and collaboration with members of any underrepresented group when engaging in work that will directly impact their experience at St. Thomas University.