DSU Executive Feedback:

Dalhousie Consultation Framework

January 08, 2020

Student consultation, participation and engagement in matters involving the student experience at Dalhousie is a fundamental philosophy and approach which is embedded across Dalhousie University. The University recognizes and values the importance of student feedback to inform policies and practices, services for students, student life, in and out of the classroom.

Principles:

- A range of opportunities and approaches are in place for student input on key policies, procedures or initiatives that impact the study body;
- The University’s Student Union has participation on key governance committees and has regular interactions with senior executive;
- Consultation effectively captures student input and outcomes of that consultation is then provided back;
- Consultation reflects meaningful engagement aimed to provide positive impacts for student experience inside and outside the classroom;
- Consultation must occur in an equitable and ethical manner. As such:
  - Consultation with students who identify as part of an equity-deserving group must be compensated when being consulted about policies, procedures, or initiatives that primarily impact their designated group (ex. Black students must be compensated for consulting on new initiatives for Black students). Students must also be compensated for consultation on policies, procedures, or initiatives that target social issues when the consultation is reliant on a student sharing lived experiences or their mental/emotional labour (ex. students who are consulted on their experience with Dalhousie’s S.V policy must be compensated). This applies to all students, including students already employed by the University. Students who are appointed to the Board of Governors or Senate must be compensated for consultation that occurs outside of the official business of those bodies. Executive Officers of the University’s Student Union are an exception to this principle.

Framework of Engagement/Consultations:

Commented [DE1]: Should be all policies

Commented [DE2]: Should be all governance committees. For example, the Budget Advisory Committee has students on it not appointed by the DSU. Students on university committees, working groups, or task forces should be appointed by the DSU so that they have access to the necessary supports.
The following categories of student consultation form a framework of engagement approaches to ensure the student voice has meaningful impact on policy, initiatives and other matters that intersect with student’s experience at Dalhousie University.

**Policy Directed Student Consultation**

Student consultation is required as part of Dalhousie’s annual budget setting process as led by the University’s Budget Advisory Committee upon which two students are represented. Consultation timelines are shared online and the university hosts information sessions and solicits input from students annually (https://www.dal.ca/dept/financial-services/budget/budget-process; timetable.html).

The budget process explicitly requires consultation with students on proposed changes to student auxiliary fees.

Development and regular review of Dalhousie’s stand-alone sexualized violence policy. The policy is reviewed every two years. That review includes student consultation.

**Student membership on Governance and Academic Committees**

- Dalhousie University Board of Governors
- Senate
- Senate Committees including the Senate Planning & Governance Committee
- University Budget Advisory Committee
- University Classroom Planning Committee
- University Accessibility and Advisory Committee

**Student Surveys**

As a component of obtaining student feedback, Dalhousie regularly participates in surveys on topics including student engagement, health and wellness, campus climate at Dalhousie, and what our students experience while attending the university related to services, supports, and the learning environment.

**Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC)** To obtain data to help improve the Dalhousie student experience, first year students are invited to participate in CUSC survey.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**, Administered by the Indiana University Centre for Post-Secondary Research NSSE measures the level of students’ engagement with the university. The survey asks how students spend their time, what they have gained from classes, interaction with faculty and other students, and the value placed on other activities across the university.

**International Student Barometer (ISB)** compares decision-making, expectations, perceptions, and intentions of international students from application to graduation. The feedback from ISB helps shape programming, services, resources to enhance the experience of international students studying at Dalhousie.

**Dalhousie Campus Climate Survey** examines the perceptions and experiences of Dalhousie students with respect to campus climate with focus on sexual violence.

Commented [DE3]: Should also be required for Tuition Fees & Residence/Food Service Fees. Consultation must occur for changes to both academic and non-academic auxiliary fees.

Commented [DE4]: It should be specifically stated that there must be student representation on any ad-hoc committees created to address unexpected impacts to students (ex. Covid - RTC).

Commented [DE5]: If not already, this survey should include race-based data collection and disaggregated results open to the public.
One of surveys such as the Dalhousie student survey administered at the end of the Winter, 2020 term to assess the student experience in the rapid change to on-line/remote academic delivery given the COVID 10 pandemic.

Routine Meetings with Senior Leadership

President & Vice-Chancellor (with Student Union Executive members)
Provost and Vice-President Academic (with Student Union Executive members)
Vice-Provost, Student Affairs (the vice-provost meets every second week with the Dalhousie Student Union Executive)

Representation on student related policy working groups

Sexualized Violence Policy
Code of Conduct Policy
Alcohol Policy
Student Residence Life (input on the Student Residence Community Living Guide)

Dalhousie Student Union

Consultation, close partnership with the Dalhousie Student Union provides an important mechanism for student involvement and input. The DSU advocates for student rights, helps build community for students through the events it organizes and through the support to over 250 student societies.

Student Leadership Academy

Intended to provide another opportunity for inclusive representation of the student body on university issues that impact students and also to provide experiential insights to leadership and management in the complexities of Universities.

Special Working Groups

Rapid Task Force on International Student Needs chaired by the Vice-Provost, Student Affairs

DAL Mobile

A newly introduced campus community app that provides a more informal way to gather student input and questions.

Commented [DE6]: Expectation should be set that administration is responsible for ensuring that these meetings occur.

Commented [DE7]: Expectation should be set that there is student representation on all student related policy working groups and that administration is required to ensure this happens.

Commented [DE8]: I've never heard of this, seen promo, or known a student who was involved.

Commented [DE9]: It should be specifically stated that there must be student representation on all special committees whose work impacts students.

Commented [DE10]: Consultation cannot occur on this app that would otherwise be required to be compensated.