Report of the President

Name: Madeleine Stinson

Reporting Period: May 01 – September 30, 2021

AGM Date: October 07, 2021

Year-Long Goal Progress

2020-21

As a returning member of the DSU executive, I believe it is important to reflect on my successes and failures of the past year; specifically, the period of October 2020 – May of 2021, which are not covered during any AGM and are only reflected in executive reports delivered during Council. The following is a summary of how my executive goals from the 2020-21 year panned out:

- Governance Review: this work was not completed as planned, as the team realized it entailed much more work than originally expected. Instead, the governance review will include assistance from the DSU’s legal representative, and finish in the Winter 2022 term. The plan for this goal was originally to conduct an organizational audit to identify inefficiencies and areas to improve the services of the DSU. However, the impact of Covid-19 on operations, which have extended into the 2021-22 term, made that impossible.

- Review of the Liquor Policy: without amending the Dalhousie Liquor Policy, the DSU achieved the underlying goal to resolve outstanding issues around Bar Services on campus. During the Summer of 2021, the DSU successfully applied for two independent liquor licenses to operate the Grawood and T-Room. We are working alongside Dalhousie, with their full support, to apply for an additional license for rooms in the Student Union Building.

- Create a mission and vision for the DSU: this again, was added to the planning for the 2021-22 year because it was not finished during my first term. During online studies, the team decided that students were not engaged enough to develop something this important. Instead, we got a quick start on this goal early in 2021 and are headed towards our second round of community consultation.

2021-22
• Summer & Fall Terms: the governance review was originally my Summer Term goal, but has flipped with my Fall Goal, to revise the DSU’s strategic plan. Where more planning and preparation for the strategic plan took place in the Summer, the governance review will finish during the Fall, with amendments brought in the Winter 2022 Term. The strategic plan will be brought to Council in early Winter 2022 Term.
• Winter Term: Alongside finishing up work on the strategic plan and governance review, the DSU will host a Women's Week campaign towards the end of the semester to respond to growing demand to hold space for the diversity of women on our campus who are leaders in student support, academia, and community.

Internal Affairs and DSU Committees

The DSU team, including our amazing team of staff, worked to adapt the SUB’s operations and programming to fit the unique nature of this Fall’s return to campus. With Covid-19 still a major consideration, but many students wanting to see things return to some sense of normalcy, there were significant challenges (but also some amazing opportunities). I am confident that the DSU has been able to meet its mandate and be a positive influence on student health and safety. Similar to what I said last year, Breaking Barriers, our Orientation Week, was a great example of this. We added an additional Welcome Week full of free programming for everyone and were able to connect with thousands of students with no Covid-19 cases. SUB Operations have largely returned to normal, and we hope to see the services and outlets that remain closed re-open in the near future.

Personally, I worked to provide support on an array of internal operational needs including executive transition planning, Orientation planning, staff hiring and training, and service delivery.

Bylaw and Policy Review Committee

The Bylaw and Policy Review Committee will play a huge role this year when we consider amendments tied to the governance review and the strategic plan. The team worked well this Fall to respond to student feedback, including the creation of a Bursary Policy to make needed clarifications on the International Student Emergency Bursary and others. They also did great work supporting policy amendments related to the updated DSU Part Time Staff Manual, which allows us to hire more students than ever. Policies on the docket include an International Students Issues Policy and a Sexualized Violence Policy.

Board of Governors and Senate Caucuses

The Board of Governors (BoG) allows for three student representatives. The DSU President sits on the BoG by virtue of the position, alongside two elected students that also sit on the DSU Council. This year, both elected BoG seats remain vacant as we approach the first Board
meeting of the year. The DSU By-Election will not conclude before the first BoG meeting, making it impossible for us to fill these seats in advance of the meeting. Thus, there is no active BoG Caucus. Instead, topics for the upcoming meeting will be brought to Council for discussion, so that I am able to go into the meeting with an informed and diverse student perspective.

The Student Senate Caucus (SSC) has been off to a great start this year. We have only had three meetings, two of which I chaired. Nevertheless, the SSC successfully presented a motion for academic amnesty for the Global Climate Strike to Senate. The team is well on the way to ensuring full student representation on all committees. In absence of a Vice President, Academic & External for the month of October, SSC operations will continue with staff support. A motion will be brought forward during October with amendments to the Student Ratings of Course Conduct that last year’s team worked through Senate.

**University Affairs and Committees**

Representing the DSU, I have been involved in university conversations on several key topics so far this year. These include:

- The student housing crisis and providing student supports
- Preparing for the fall and Covid-19 safety through the Return to Campus Committee and now the Transition Advisory Group
- Residence Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct amendments and application, including the importance of harm reduction programming
- Relationships between Dalhousie and the Halifax Regional Police, including preparation for Homecoming Weekend
- Better cross-campus collaboration and communication related to events and cultural celebrations
- Planning and execution of educational resources for the provincial and federal elections
- Community collaboration and involvement in local initiatives

Several important conversations will continue with the university over the course of the year, with priority to pushing for meaningful student representation in decision-making spaces, accessible education, a more responsible approach to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives, and the bettering of the student experience through programming, supports, and services.

The DSU is also in the process of working with Dalhousie to find opportunities for the university to connect with students so that despite our differences and conflicts, there are also spaces for community building and celebration.

**External and Broader Community**
The DSU began this year with some early advocacy, calling formally for a tuition freeze with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. The conversation on rising tuition fees and advocacy for accessible education continued through the summer and will remain a priority for the remainder of the year and in our strategic plan.

A few key topics have required a strong media response from the DSU:

- Tuition increases and accessible education
- Student housing, the Halifax housing crisis, and changes to residence
- Student expectations for the fall, and concerns around Covid-19
- Orientation Week
- Homecoming Partying

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)

The DSU remains in a prospective membership with the Federation, as a referendum has yet to be held. This year’s executive team made the choice to actively push for CFS to hold a referendum as soon as possible and in line with the DSU’s Elections Policy and Bylaws, so that students may finally have their say on CFS’s status on campus. As was the case last year, the DSU has decided not to engage in any long-term or large-scale partnerships with the CFS until a referendum vote has occurred.

The DSU met with CFS this September to discuss prospective membership status and whether a referendum was possible under the context of both organization’s governing documents.

Updates, once finalized, will be communicated through Council.

Upcoming Dates & Things to Expect

- October: Mi’kmaq History Month (Nova Scotia). The DSU is partnering with Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES) to show a movie screening in the SUB to help raise awareness for the first annual, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. The DSU will also be installing an exhibition of the TRC Calls to Action that pertain to higher education in the SUB. Over the course of the year, the DSU plans to uphold and prioritize Indigenous calls to action, in collaboration with our Indigenous members.
- October 08: DSU By-Election Nominations open
- Fall term: the remainder of the fall term will include a host of programming. We are especially excited to welcome students to 24/7 SUB hours during the fall exam period, to make room for late-night studiers. We hope to supplement this with a variety of well-being focused initiatives.
I hope to give a good understanding to members as to what my goals are, the progress I have made, and what I am hoping to achieve for the rest of my term. Since my start at the DSU, I have fulfilled my summer goal, have begun to work on my fall goal, and am on track to fulfilling what I have aimed to achieve.

Not only have I made progress on some of my previous goals coming into this role, but I have adjusted my goals as I have learned. For example, I have shifted focus to how I can work directly with societies in my goals so that I am not doing this work alone! Societies are so valuable and have so much existing knowledge. I will continue to collaborate with societies and adjust my goals as needed throughout the year.

**What is the DSU?**

Something I hope to achieve this year is to help students understand what the student union does and how it operates. My summer goal was to help design and create a brochure to put into O-week packages for new students to have as a guide for the DSU. With the help of our amazing communications team we were successful and not only had enough for O-week packages but for a few tabling sessions afterward. My goal for the rest of the year is to look into ways of transferring the information we put into the brochure onto different platforms in order to reach more students.

**Student Collaboration**

My goal for the fall semester is to work with student societies and organizations that serve specific members of our community in order to pool resources and work on identifying and filling in any gaps. I am starting by working with Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES) to revive a group called the Collaborative+ which is a collective of 2SLGBTQ+ organizations on campus designed to advocate and support the 2SLGBTQ+ community on campus. I am currently in the process of reaching out to the
organizations involved in the group, as many have been on a hiatus over the summer. I hope that by the end of this year not only will we have been able to meet but also explore what long-term role the DSU can play in supporting 2SLGBTQ+ students on campus. If this model of collaboration of student organizations proves to be successful, I hope to look into applying it to other communities that I think could benefit such as graduate student and Sexton campus societies.

Annual Survey

In the winter semester I am hoping to launch the DSU annual survey and work with student societies in order to discuss how to best use the information that we gather from students. I found that the information from last year’s survey was very interesting but that there are not many opportunities where we get to apply this information. My hope is to find more concrete ways to use the data from the annual survey in advocacy, student supports, and programming.

Internal Affairs and DSU Committees

- Residence Councils - This year the student union decided to take on more of a role in helping set up the residence councils. We worked with Reslife to run the residence council elections and we are working to help get each council up and running.
- Bike Centre - At the end of last year it was brought to our attention that the Bike Centre had not been running at full capacity so we worked to elect a new executive for the board. Myself and union staff worked to run the Bike Centre AGM and get the newly elected Bike Centre board set up to re-ratify the society for the 2021-22 year.
- Society Ratification started May 1st and we have successfully ratified 196 societies and counting. Each society is required to attend anti-oppression training which we partnered with HRES to create.
- I sat on the hiring committees for several student union staff positions this year, hiring for the following offices: Survivor Support Centre, Sustainability office, Sexton Coordinator, and the Equity and Accessibility office.
- During O-week this year, myself along with the other executives worked with the VP Student Life to help create a great experience for students. I helped work registration, and attended almost all of the events for the week. I also helped with Welcome Week by doing student outreach both to welcome them back to Dalhousie and inform them about the upcoming federal election.
- On September 15 we held our annual Fall Society Expo. The event was very successful especially considering it has been our first in-person expo since the start of the pandemic. We held the event from 10 am – 3pm on the second floor of the SUB. We had many students attend and societies have given a lot of positive feedback on the engagement they had at the event.
• Over the past few weeks I have sat on the Grants Committee and helped approve applications for funding.

Society Review Committee (SRC)
The SRC has been working to make sure societies can make the best out of this semester. We have approved the ratifications of almost all of the levy and faculty societies. We are also currently working with staff to have society office spaces assigned by phase 5 or as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Student Accessibility Fund Committee (SAFC)
The SAFC has been meeting regularly in order to process all of the applications we have been receiving from students with disabilities this year.

University Affairs and Committees
• I have been attending the executive team’s bi-weekly meetings with Student Affairs.
• I have been meeting regularly with the Vice Provost Equity and Inclusion. We have frequently discussed how the DSU can work with the office to find students for university-wide committees. These meetings also consist of general updates about what the office of the VP Equity and Inclusion has been working on.
• I have been attending meetings of the Building Accessibility Working Group for the New Physical Science Facility, as well as the Dalhousie University Accessibility Steering Committee.

External and Broader Community
N/A

Upcoming Dates
N/A
Report of the Vice President, Finance and Operations

Name: Mohab Brisha

Reporting Period: May 01 – September 30, 2021

AGM Date: October 07, 2021

Year-Long Goal Progress

- My summer goal was to develop a detailed student engagement plan to be implemented in the fall. I have completed the engagement plan proposal, and meetings are in place to gain executive feedback and approval.
- My fall goal is to work with students on the Board of Governors to advocate for more student representation and lower tuition fees. Work has yet to begin in earnest regarding this goal.
- My winter goal is to review the DSU and Dalhousie budgets, along with potential external sources, to suggest opportunities for accessible funding options for individuals and societies. I have already begun to work on optimizing our internal funding channels to prepare for any additional funding opportunities for societies.

Internal Affairs and DSU Committees

Executive Transition

- Participated in DSU Training sessions, got acquainted with much of the operations and procedures of the DSU, and reviewed the DSU’s budget for this year with the Director of Operations.
- Registered as a signatory for the DSU, got set up on the RBC edge payment system, and received training on printer setup in the office.
- Met with the Health Plan representatives for a breakdown of the current standing of the Health Plan.

Society Audits

- This summer I identified shortcomings in the existing society audit process and updated the audit templates and system. The system is currently being implemented. Full
integration is expected by the winter semester. I am working on updates to the society audits webpage to represent the new processes.

- I have started conducting audits for societies.
- I am working on creating a special audit process for the South African Student Trust (SASEP) to reflect their unique status.

Treasurer Training

- The schedule for treasurer training sessions is complete. Sessions are approximately 3 weeks apart, creating plenty of opportunities for support. The first in-person treasurer training session in over a year was successfully completed.
- I have held regular meetings with society treasurers to resolve any issues they face or questions they may have as they get oriented into their positions.

Policy Work

- I have participated in discussions around international student issues policy development.
- I worked to propose amendments to the International Student Emergency Bursary Policy (now the Bursary Policy).
- I have been looking further at the Bursary Policy to clarify the acceptable means of depositing money for students approved for funds under the International Student Emergency Bursary.

Other Internal Work

- I sat on the hiring committee for our bar manager position.
- I have been sitting on the Society Review Committee and helping to approve society ratifications.
- I assisted with our Eid care package event.
- I did outreach for the federal elections and to promote the AGM to students.
- I assisted with O-week events from September 04-10.
- I have been working with the Societies & Programming Coordinator, VP Internal, and the Residence Life Team on improving the residence council system.
- I have been working with the S&P Coordinator, VPI, and current Bike Centre representatives to take the steps needed to ensure the Bike Centre's services can get back up and running on campus.

Grants and Sponsorship Committee Updates

Grants Committee met in September to award funding, and I am currently working to streamline the process.
University Affairs and Committees

- I have been sitting on the Code of Student Conduct Review Committee.
- I met with AACRAO to discuss how Dalhousie can address equity issues specifically with admissions. AACRAO is a consulting company Dalhousie hired to understand what barriers there are in the admissions process at Dalhousie.
- I was involved with the hiring process for the Provost & VP Academic role.

External and Broader Community

I did an interview with the Dal Gazette regarding international student tuition and fees at Dalhousie.

Upcoming Dates

N/A
Report of the Vice President, Student Life

Name: Mazen Brisha

Reporting Period: May 01 – September 30, 2021

AGM Date: October 07, 2021

Year-Long Goal Progress

Setting goals during your executive tenure is an imperative aspect of the job that ensures accountability, transparency and improves productivity. When setting my goals, I attempted to base them on what I believe are the biggest issues and challenges facing our union today. The three central areas I have identified are: Food Insecurity, Mental Health and student engagement. Hence, I have decided to prioritize them as my Summer, Fall and Winter goals respectively.

Food Insecurity

My summer executive goal has been to hold meetings with relevant stakeholders with the view to mobilize a plan for countering food insecurity. This is something I have worked on tirelessly over the summer, meeting with representatives from other food banks in the HRM and Nova Scotia. I have also worked to consult with national organizations that aim to counter food insecurity through regional action. I have met and discussed research projects with Nutrition professors such as Professor Jo Welch with a view to conduct a nutritional assessment of a university student population that could be used to request policy changes and subsidization from the government. Looking forward I aim to develop a comprehensive plan based on my findings to be used to inform DSU consultation, decisions and actions regarding countering food insecurity.

Mental Health Committee

My goal for the fall semester is to work on developing an inclusive mental health committee that could be called upon to be consulted on DSU programming to provide a harm reduction and mental health support perspective. The mental health committee would have representation from each campus as well as providing a platform for
minority students. This committee would aim to help advise and flag any potential mental health risk factors so that the DSU can take proactive measures to mitigate harm.

**Student Engagement**

Student engagement is pivotal in ensuring the union represents student needs and due to that my winter goal is to increase DSU election voter turnout to at least 15%. Voter turnout has been in decline in previous years and developing an engagement plan to better involve students in the DSU’s programming and operations is essential to boosting voter turnout numbers. In another excellent opportunity for exec collaboration, this goal will benefit from the VPFO’s goal to develop an engagement plan and the VPI’s goal to better inform students on what the DSU is, making this a central goal of the whole team.

**Internal Affairs and DSU Committees**

- **O-week Planning Committee:** As VPSL organizing, planning and supervising a safe, inclusive and enjoyable O-week is one of the fundamental aspects of the job. Regular meetings with the events commissioner, Director of Research and Outreach, and head volunteers were integral in ensuring students are provided with the best experience possible. Risk assessment and inclusive accommodation were key tasks of this group to ensure risk factors such as COVID-19, binge drinking, and sexualized violence are mitigated.
- **Executive Committee:** Collaborative work amongst the executive team is essential in ensuring effective communication is maintained while ensuring differing perspectives are available to be consulted while making decisions that impact the student body.
- **Residence Council:** An excellent example of successful collaboration is the improvements made to the residence council set up this year. This project involved coordination between the VPFO, VPI and Res Life to ensure the council is operational in a timely manner.

**University Affairs and Committees**

- **Bi-weekly student affairs meeting.**
- **Bi-weekly meeting with residence life in the summer and monthly meetings in the fall:** These meetings provide insight and collaborative opportunity to work on programming together and ensure student needs are prioritized in residence decision-making.
• Monthly meeting with athletics: These meetings enable the DSU to build a healthy amicable relationship with Dalhousie’s athletic department to facilitate future collaborations and work on larger projects to serve students.

• Monthly meeting with Dal after dark: These meetings facilitate an effective communication network and enable coordination that ensures both parties run events and programming without conflicts.

• Monthly meeting with HRES to discuss pertinent student issues facing the community and how best to address them. Topics such as anti-oppression, food insecurity, mental health and sexualized violence have been identified as areas that require further policy implementation to best protect students.

**External and Broader Community**

• Bi-weekly HealthyMinds NS committee: This committee aims to serve the mental health needs of students by evaluating current services available and consulting relevant stakeholders to ensure resources available to students are maximized and that mental health is heavily considered in all programming.

**Upcoming Dates**

N/A