DSU Council Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date and Time: January 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Land Acknowledgement

The Dalhousie Student Union acknowledges that Dalhousie University and the Dalhousie Student Union Building are located on traditional, unceded and unsurrendered Mi’kma’ki territory. The Dalhousie Student Union seeks to honour the relational treaty process in its programming, events, and meetings.

Equity Statement

Student union solidarity is based on the principle that all members should be able to participate equally in their union, recognizing that students have diverse experiences of privilege and marginalization. As members of the students’ union, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding are our goals. We should neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

It is our collective responsibility to create an inclusive space for discussion and dialogue. Any form or forms of discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated, nor will hate speech rooted in, but not limited to, sexist, racist, classist, ableist, homophobic or transphobic sentiments and/or remarks. We all have an obligation to ensure that an open and inclusive space, free of hate is established. If you violate this understanding, you will be asked to leave.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of the Agenda

MOTION 2022-01-24-3.1

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda for the present meeting be adopted as presented.
4. Business Arising Out of the Minutes

5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

MOTION 2022-01-24-5.1

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the Council meeting on January 10, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

6. Communications Received

6.1 The previous Faculty of Engineering Rep, Patrick Oldfield, has graduated. The Dalhousie Undergraduate Engineering Society has appointed a new rep for the remainder of the 2021/22 term. The new rep is DUES VP Outreach, Zuhair Zaidi.

6.2 Due to the previous Faculty of Computer Science Rep being recalled to by-election, the DSU President reached out to the Computer Science Society and asked them to appoint a new representative for the remainder of the 2021/22 term. The new Computer Science Rep on Council is Heemal Morakhia.

7. Appointments by Council

MOTION 2022-01-24-7.1

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ and _____ be appointed to the Elections Committee for the 2021-22 academic year.

Moved by the President

Nominations to be brought forward by Oversight Committee

MOTION 2022-01-24-7.2

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ and _____ be appointed to the Ad Hoc Emergency Housing Bursary Committee.

Moved by the Vice-President, Academic and External

Nominations to be brought forward by Oversight Committee

MOTION 2022-01-24-7.3

Whereas the membership of the Ad Hoc Mental Health Committee includes at least three (3) general members; and

Whereas there is no limit imposed on how many additional general members may be appointed as voting members to the committee;

THEREFORE:
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following individual(s) be appointed to the general member seat(s) on the Ad Hoc Mental Health Committee: ____________________.

Moved by the Vice-President, Student Life

Nominations to be brought forward by Oversight Committee

MOTION 2022-01-24-7.4

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ be appointed to the Budget and Finance Committee for the 2021-22 academic year.

Moved by the Vice-President, Finance and Operations

Nominations to be brought forward by Oversight Committee

MOTION 2022-01-24-7.5

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ be appointed to the Oversight Committee for the 2021-22 academic year.

Moved by the President

Nominations to be brought forward by Oversight Committee

8. Presentations

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Fall 2021 Executive Review Report

Presented by Oversight Committee

Document attached.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

MOTION 2022-01-24-11.1

WHEREAS in 2009, the membership of the Dalhousie Student Union voted in favour of the following referendum question: “Do you support stabilizing the DSU Health and Dental plans by allowing yearly adjustments in premiums only when necessary, based on inflationary costs and prior claims experience? Any other adjustments not related to inflationary costs or claims experience must be approved by a referendum”; and
WHEREAS current Health and Dental claims paid almost exceed premiums collected from the members; and

WHEREAS the DSU is required to keep a certain level of reserve funds in order to maintain a self-insured plan, and a self-insured plan allows the DSU to maintain lower overall rates for our members; and

WHEREAS in the past, the DSU Council has approved sudden and steep increases to the Health and Dental plan that were not sustainable for students, in order to compensate for years of poor Health and Dental plan management; and

WHEREAS this situation is best mitigated by year-to-year fee adjustments of several dollars at a time that prevent unsustainable plan costs for students; and

WHEREAS a fee adjustment of several dollars per student effectively spreads the cost of student medical care among our many members, subsidizing the cost of care for those who need it most; and

WHEREAS this fee adjustment would enable the DSU to continue to support its most vulnerable members during the Covid-19 pandemic by continuing to provide physical and mental health coverage to those that rely on it; and

WHEREAS all students are required to have health insurance coverage in order to attend Dalhousie; and

WHEREAS all students at Dalhousie, international and domestic, are enrolled in the DSU Health plan unless opted-out;

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Health Plan single student fee be increased 1% ($2.83), and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Health Plan family fee be increased 1% ($2.83), and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT these increases will take effect September 2022.

Moved by the Vice-President, Finance and Operations

MOTION 2022-01-24-11.2

WHEREAS in 2009, the membership of the Dalhousie Student Union voted in favour of the following referendum question: “Do you support stabilizing the DSU Health and Dental plans by allowing yearly adjustments in premiums only when necessary, based on inflationary costs and prior claims experience? Any other adjustments not related to inflationary costs or claims experience must be approved by a referendum”; and

WHEREAS the DSU executive committee continues to receive feedback from members detailing their experience with the Central Nervous System (CNS) stimulants claims cap (currently $500.00 per annum) being too low to support their needs; and

WHEREAS CNS stimulants can be used to mitigate the symptoms of cognitive conditions like narcolepsy, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and others that impact an individual’s quality of life and ability; and

WHEREAS the DSU believes that the Health plan coverage should be reflective of the wishes of its membership; and
WHEREAS the DSU believes that healthcare should be accessible to everyone; and

WHEREAS CNS stimulants are the DSU Health Plan’s most commonly claimed medicine; and

WHEREAS the DSU’s Health plan provider, Student VIP, estimated that a 3% fee increase to the Health Plan will put the DSU on a financially sustainable path to removing the CNS cap entirely in the near future; and

WHEREAS increasing the CNS stimulant claims cap to $1000.00 per annum would lower the out-of-pocket cost for the many members requiring these medications, increasing their quality of life; and

WHEREAS a 3% increase to the Health plan fee would allow the DSU to increase the CNS stimulant claims cap to $1000.00 per annum for the 2022-23 academic year;

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Health Plan single student fee be increased 3% ($8.48); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Health Plan family fee be increased 3% ($8.48); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT these increases will take effect September 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT unless the claims for CNS stimulants during the 2022-23 academic year necessitate a further increase to the Health plan fee, that the DSU executive shall exercise their power to remove the CNS cap entirely by the end of 2023, if appropriate.

Moved by the Vice-President, Finance and Operations

MOTION 2022-01-24-11.3

WHEREAS in the 2021-21 academic year the DSU created a one-time wellness bursary, aimed at providing finances to enable students to engage in wellness activities; and

WHEREAS this bursary was very popular and applied to by many students, not all of whom received funds; and

WHEREAS the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and latest Omicron variant wave continue to take a toll on the health and wellbeing of students;

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT an ad-hoc wellness bursary is struck; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the bursary is a total of $15,000.00, allocated from Student VIP funds, a pool of monies provided by the DSU’s health insurance provider on an annual basis that must be used for mental health initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the funding per limit applicant is $500.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the wellness bursary committee shall consist of the DSU President, one Councillor, and one Member at Large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the bursary’s term extends until March 31st, 2022, or the time that the fund is exhausted, whichever occurs first; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the ad hoc wellness bursary will follow all other conditions as outlined in the Bursary Policy and the attached Terms of Reference for the wellness bursary committee.

Moved by the President

Document attached.

MOTION 2022-01-24-11.4

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Executive Committee and Oversight Committee work together to develop a plan for how the Executive Committee will implement Oversight Committee’s Recommendations from the Fall 2021 Executive Review Report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the DSU President and Chair of Oversight Committee develop this plan, in consultation with their respective committees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this plan be presented to DSU Council for final approval at the next council meeting on February 7th.

Moved by Chair of Oversight Committee

Document attached.

12. Executive Reports

12.1 Report of the President

12.2 Report of the Vice President, Internal

12.3 Report of the Vice President, Finance and Operations

12.4 Report of the Vice President, Academic and External

12.5 Report of the Vice President, Student Life

13. Notice of Motion

14. Announcements

14.1 The next meeting of Council will be held on Monday, February 7, 2022. Council meetings will continue to be held virtually until further notice.

15. Adjournment