Implementation Plan for Fall 2021 Oversight Committee Recommendations

02-03-2022

Chair of Oversight Committee, Stephen Abbott
DSU President, Madeleine Stinson

In their Executive Review Report from the Fall 2021 Term, the DSU Oversight Committee gave eight (8) recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, and professional development of the Executive Officers in the following areas:

• Adopted Goal Plan’s clearly defined outcomes and timelines
• Bylaw and Policy compliance
• Meeting attendance
• Reporting obligations

On January 24, 2022, DSU Council voted in favor of the following motion:

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
The Recommendations

Recommendation 1: There was a noted lack of engagement with some executives and policy changes. The Committee recommends that all executives take a more active role in policy development.

Recommendation 2: The overarching theme of the review undertaken was that there is significant overlapping of work done by executives. The Committee recommends that the executives focus solely on work directly related to the guidelines set out by the bylaws. To ensure compliance, the Committee recommends the adoption of a template for executive reports to council that require executives to directly relate their work to the bylaws, so that the executive committee members are working on their portfolio.

Recommendation 3: Resulting from review of documents from this term and the conversation with Oversight Committee, more information and transparency is required regarding the actions of Vice President Student Life with respect to their work on mental health and wellness this term. The Committee recommends that council adopts a motion to request a complete report from the Vice President Student Life regarding the contents of meetings with Healthy Minds NS and a detailed overview of their plan to work on mental health and wellness, with specific goals and outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Following committee discussions, The Committee recommends council request a report on the nature of accessibility in DSU programming. The committee is specifically interested on activities that could be exclusionary towards people with physical disabilities. There is a concern that adequate efforts have not been made to engage in accessible programming, including in beginning of this year programming for example. Efforts should be made to increase accessibility in a systemic manner, which should first commence with an analysis, which is why we recommend council requests a report.

Recommendation 5: Overall, there were serious concerns regarding the content of meetings held between executives and various organizations. The Committee recommends more reporting on the nature of meetings held with external organizations, so union members can better understand what is being advocated for. This could be accomplished through a standardized reporting process to council (in executive reports, for example) on the contents of meetings.

Recommendation 6: Also, a significant area of concern is the work allegedly completed regarding food insecurity among students by the Vice President Student Life. It features prominently in their year-long goal report, but after an interview it is unclear as to exactly what work was done and whether their description accurately describes their work. The Committee recommends council request all documents and work related to food insecurity to determine what work the VPSL accomplished.

Recommendation 7: Following concerns regarding exactly who completed the work on restarting the bike center, the Committee recommends not only instituting recommendation 2, but requesting a report from both the Vice President Internal and the Vice President Finance and Operations to understand who worked to restart the bike center. The Committee is concerned this issue of multiple executives taking credit for a project speaks to a wider cultural issue among the executives. The reports should be scrutinized by council to determine if an executive intentionally misled the council in any of their reports regarding the work they completed.

Recommendation 8: The Committee notes serious issues with attendance among some executives. The Committee recommends council take a more active role in monitoring the attendance of executives at their committee meetings.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation 1: No tangible action items could be identified to encourage executives to take a more active role in policy development. The president will continue to promote the pathway for bringing policy amendments to the Bylaw & Policy Review Committee, and involvement in the government review.

Recommendation 2: The executive report templates have been edited (see Appendix I) to include the date and times of meetings and an added section for executives to report on the progress of their individual goals. The Executive Policy will also be reviewed by BRPC during the governance review to ensure that executive goals are relevant to respective portfolios.

Recommendation 3: A request (see Appendix II) was sent to the Vice President, Student Life to provide agendas and a summary of discussion for the Healthy Minds NS meetings he has attended during his term, as well as documentation of the work done so far to create the mental health committee and the Fall health and wellness campaign.

Recommendation 4: A request (see Appendix II) was sent to the Vice President, Student Life to provide a list of accessible events/programming he ran, and agenda and minutes from Student Life Committee meetings where accessible programming was discussed, OR record of other consultation with students on accessible programming.

Recommendation 5: The executive report templates have been edited (see Appendix I) to include more guidelines for executives on how to properly report on external meetings.

Recommendation 6: A request (see Appendix II) was sent to the Vice President, Student Life to provide documentation of the work done so far on food insecurity.

Recommendation 7: Based on the 01-24-2022 Council meeting, we consider the concerns under this recommendation resolved.

Recommendation 8: No tangible items could be identified to encourage councillors to take a more active role in reading executive reports to confirm committee attendance. The executive report templates have been edited (see Appendix I) to include a defined sub-section for reporting the dates and activities of all committee meetings. The President’s report template will also include record of the attendance of executives at the executive committee meeting. The executive will brainstorm informal methods to improve councillor engagement with reports.

Based on the implementation status of recommendation 3,4, and 6, and an absence of response from the VPSL, we recommend Council move a motion to set a deadline for the VPSL’s response.